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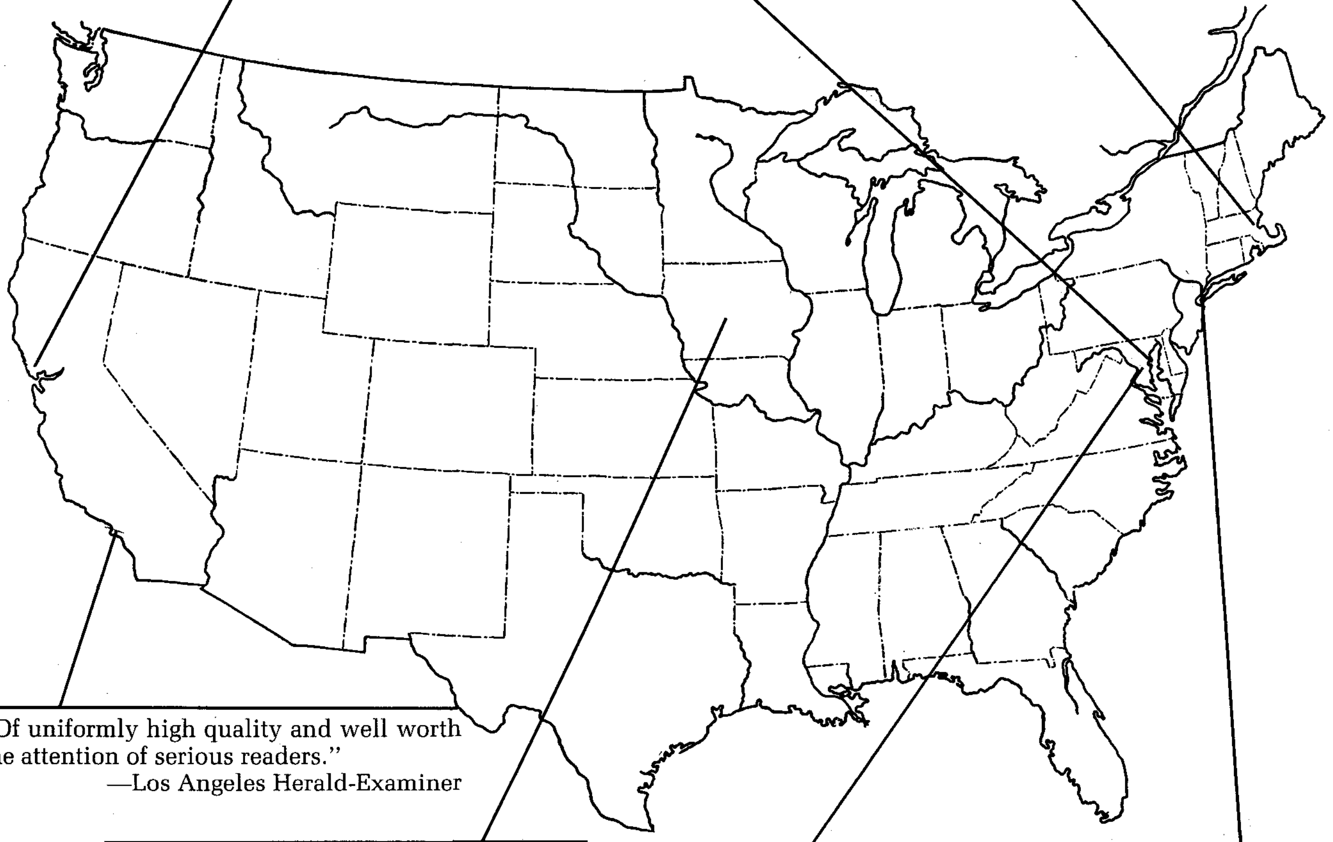

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

So much of this number of the NAR is taken up with the various faces of the city of San Francisco, and contributing editor Kenneth Lash has introduced his selections so well (beginning on page 13), that any further comment here might be construed as lily-gilding. Yet perhaps the reader will permit us to remark our own favorites: the lovely warm recollections by Eleanor Sully of Telegraph Hill as it was in those Depression days when hard times were made bearable by the realization that life is always livable, and even enjoyable if one's values are turned away from the materialisms that now absorb us; Beth Coffelt's felicitous examination of the work of William T. Wiley, who also provides us with our December cover; and the lovely photographs of Ed Buryn and Lawrence Sturhahn and M. Halberstadt, evocative of both the best and the worst of a complex urban world.

The city has somewhat encroached upon the usual features of the magazine—whittling down the number of short stories, poems, reviews, et al.—but we think it's worth noting at year's end that in 1983 the NAR brought you 39 stories by 36 authors, and 43 poems by 21 poets. The totals by themselves suggest that a lot of good literature is being made in the USA and Canada (literature being one of the precious few worthwhile products of this lunatic continent); we like to think the quality of the work reinforces that suggestion. For the present issue, we commend everything to your attention—perhaps most especially Flossie Lewis's strong and scarey insights into the status of pornography on this eve of the real 1984.

A footnote or two: Ecco Press has published *The Crush*, by Gary Gildner, and New Rivers Press has given its Minnesota Writers Project fiction award to Perry Glasser's *Suspicious Origins*. The title story of both collections appeared originally in the NAR.

★ THE NORTH AMERICAN ★

REVIEW

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Beds

Around 4:30 p.m. I rush over to Psychiatry to pick up the bed list for the evening. I've spent most of the day in the Emergency Room, skipping classes, Grand Rounds, lunch and supervision, and still have two patients waiting for me, so when I get to the basement of the Psych building, all I want to do is grab the list and run, but Millie, who does admitting during the day, pulls me aside.

"There's no beds in the City," she tells me. "Bellevue's full, Met swears they're full; I've had calls from all over, people who want to transfer patients. I tell them we don't have any beds."

"What *do* I have?" I say.

"Not much. Two beds, one on 5 and one on 3, but the one on 5 is being held for a long-term patient, and the one on 3 is for research."

"Any discharges tomorrow?"

"One possible from 7. But they've got a patient on Medicine who's all ready to be transferred back over . . ."

"So I can't use the cot."

"Exactly."

"So where *can* I admit to?"

"Well, if you absolutely positively *have* to admit . . ." Millie goes through the possibilities. There aren't many, and if I *do* decide to admit somebody, I have to clear it with the Attending first. "Just don't admit more than one."

"Great," I say. I fold the bed list inside the message book, and then remember the calls I haven't returned: a Mr. Diaz (all names in this piece have been changed) from Queens, and a Dr. Rabindath; so I stop by my office and call. I try Rabindath first, and while I'm waiting, I pull saran wrap off my ham-and-cheese sandwich—a late lunch.

After several rings he answers.

"Hello? Thank you for calling back," the doctor says. He speaks in an accent—Indian or Pakistani. He is calling from a small hospital in Brooklyn. "I have a patient in my Emergency Room," he says, "You might be interested in him . . ."

"I'm sorry, I don't have any beds," I say.

"Just let me tell you," he says.

"I told you, I don't have a single bed."

There is a pause: perhaps he is trying to decide whether to accuse me of lying, or whether to go ahead and describe the patient to me—if I find him interesting enough, maybe I'd suddenly discover an empty bed. I've been on the other side of this often enough—screaming at the administrator at Bellevue or the Resident On-Call at Jacobi, accusing them of lying, of withholding what I *know* is there—that I feel somewhat sorry for him. So I tell him to call Millie in the morning: maybe we'll have beds then. He says "thank you" in a mellifluous Indian tone. I hang up and eat a few bites of my sandwich, then dial Mr. Diaz in Queens.

"Hello, doctor?"

"Mr. Diaz?"

"Yes, this is Mr. Diaz. Tell me, do you have a bed for my son? He just came back from Puerto Rico, he's a schizophrenic, and he's worse . . . I think he needs to be in the hospital. . . ."

He starts telling me about his son, who is threatening Mrs. Diaz with a knife.

"Where do you live?"

"Queens."

"Where in Queens? What's the nearest hospital?"

"Elmhurst. But doctor, I don't want him to go back there—it's a terrible place. Can I bring him to your Emergency Room?"

"I'm sorry, I don't have any beds," I say.

"But if I bring him in . . ."

"Do you live between . . ." I describe our catchment area, a small rectangle of Manhattan.

"No, but why should that make a difference?"

I've explained this a hundred times, the catchment areas of New York's psychiatric services, and even though I hear the desperation in Mr. Diaz' voice, I can't help feeling annoyed: why do they always put the blame on us doctors? Why do I have to stand in defense of a system I think is ridiculous? Why do I have to spend my days On Call turning away desperate people, sending them to state or city hospitals where the care—though not necessarily lousy—is rarely first-rate? And more, why do I have to send so many sick people back out to the streets?

"But if I bring him to your Emergency Room . . ."

"Then I'll have him transferred back to Elmhurst. I'm telling you, sir, I have no beds." I sigh. Mr. Diaz is getting to me. I give him Millie's number too: if his son can last through the night . . . maybe we'll have beds tomorrow. Tomorrow. What a softie I've become. I don't know how Millie deals with all these calls. Anyhow, whatever beds there might be tomorrow—weren't they promised away days ago? The whole system stinks. But I've got patients in the E.R.; I've got to get back.

I go upstairs, just to have the opportunity to go outside in the March drizzle—on my way out I get paged again, and duck into the mailroom to answer. It's the Front Desk.

"Doctor? There's a psychiatrist on the line. Wants to know if there are any beds . . . he has a patient in his office . . ."

I curse. I tell the operator to give him a message—no beds. But I'm barely inside the lobby of the Main Hospital when she calls me again. I ignore her. I stop by the vending machines to grab a cup of coffee, and then back to the glass-enclosed nursing station of the Emergency Room. By that time she's paging me on both beepers.

"The doctor wants to talk to you *personally*."

Through the glass wall I see the security guard, heavy-set, bored, standing before Room 6, the psychiatric room, keeping an eye on my patient. She's a woman who went berserk at work and was brought in by her boss, and is now lying in restraints on a stretcher.

"Go ahead."

The doctor comes on. He is a friend of one of our professors, he says, and he has a patient in his office right now, who he's going to put in a cab and send here for admission.

"Where does the patient live?" I say. It's getting a bit ridiculous.

The Village, he tells me. He knows the patient isn't catchment, but his friend the professor . . ."

"Have you talked with him?"

"No, but I'm sure he'll approve . . ."

"Well, he doesn't have anything to do with admissions. Anyway, we don't have any beds. So I suggest you send him to his catchment hospital . . ." I hang up. I have a feeling I'm not done with this patient; that he'll show up in half an hour in a cab, or wander in at 3 a.m. with a note from his doctor, or that his family will bring him here and refuse to budge. It's impossible—in some strange way it's similar to trying to find an apartment in Manhattan.

In Room 6 the woman is screaming at the top of her lungs; she is convinced, as far as I can tell, that there is a plot against her involving both the City of Brooklyn and the IRS. She stops for a moment when I come in, but when I explain that I want her to sign in to the hospital, she starts up again. I go back out and bother the Medicine Resident again. The woman's been here since I came this morning, awaiting transfer to Metropolitan, the city hospital, where, hours ago, when there were still beds, I convinced the Resident to take her (my hospital doesn't take involuntary patients); now it's just a matter of getting medical clearance and rounding up the ambulance attendants.

The Medical Resident bristles when I come up to him.

"Do you think you could go see my patient?" I say. "We're all ready for the transfer if you clear her."

"Okay, okay. I'll be there," he says. "I've got an MI and two asthmas first. These are sick people . . ."

"So's this one," I say.

He pushes out of his chair and grabs the papers from my hand.

"I'll see her, okay. Any medical problems?"

"Hypertension, nothing else."

Stethoscope in hand, he goes into 6.

I look for my other patient. A scruffy-looking fiftyish man with a bulging suitcase, a muttering street-person of the kind you see at Broadway and 90th; I'd passed him on my way to 4:30 report. I don't see him now.

I call the Security Guard.

"Hey, what happened to that guy?"

"Which? The bum? The paranoid one? He was right here. Maybe he's in the bathroom." Security goes and knocks on the bathroom door. "He ain't in the bathroom. Must have left."

"I told you I wanted him to be *watched*," I say.

Security looks hurt.

The registrar speaks up. "He didn't like all the police here. Said he's going to look for another hospital. He's gone."

"Sorry, doc," says Security. "I was watching the other one, and he must have gone out . . ."

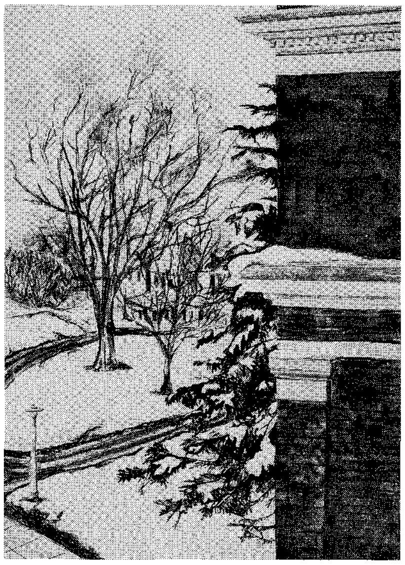
I go back inside the glass booth. Paul, one of the Surgery Residents, is there—I know him from the consults I've done on surgical floors. He's on E.R. now, 24 hours on, 24 off.

"That your lady screaming in there?" Paul says.

"Not for long," I say. "She's on her way to Met."

"How do you stand it?" he says.

"Oh, you get to like it after awhile. I mean, this isn't much fun, but there's good cases every so often. . . . Sometimes it's pretty interesting." I can tell he doesn't believe me (not with the screams in the background), but the odd thing is that it's true. After eight months of E.R. call I've almost gotten to enjoy it. First I hated it—absolutely despised the chaos, the screaming, the threats, the lost patients, the surly, nasty staff, and the horrible, overwhelming feeling that all of New York's craziness is ready to walk in your door. But recently something's changed. The patients see something different in me too—things they've been saying recently: that I'm the first person who really listened to them, that they feel comfortable talking to me. That's a change. You can turn people around here, if you really listen to them, find out what's bothering them—and how often does one person really listen to another?—someone who is getting depressed, going psychotic, about to fall apart after losing his job or breaking up with his wife; you can work out a way for them to stay out of the hospital; you make the diagnosis that nobody's been able to figure out before, sometimes for years; you adjust their medication; you figure what's wrong with their therapy; or whatever.



Not that Paul's listening. He's leaning against the counter, looking at one of the nurses, who is talking to a paramedic about her trip to Cançun. The ambulance drivers come in; they're ready to take my lady. Is she medically cleared?

"Yeah, go ahead."

They wheel the stretcher out of Room 6, past the Security Guard, the registration desk, out the sliding doors where the EMS truck idles outside. The doors slide open, closed, and exhaust fumes waft inside. We can't hear her screaming anymore.

Paul's poring over some x-rays. The medical people are talking excitedly about metaclopramide. I sit.

Then there's a commotion over by the entrance: ambulance attendants suddenly appear, pulling a stretcher, and there's an urgent call on the overhead page, and suddenly everyone in the nursing station but me rushes out after the stretcher, which is wheeled into the trauma room. There's a man on the stretcher, and they're bagging him as they go past.

It's a long while before Paul returns. By that time I've finished my coffee and been paged twice by the Front Desk—a lady in a midtown hotel having an anxiety attack, a man wanting to ask questions about his anti-depressant meds.

"Yes," I say. "That's expected. That's right. No, it's the usual dose. Okay. No, I know what you mean. Right. Constipation. Yes. Goodbye."

I hang up. Next to me, Paul is furiously writing a note.

"What was it?" I say.

"Gunshot wound. Dead by the time they got him out of the truck."

"What happened?"

"Guy was standing at the 72nd St. entrance to the Park and somebody shot him. Probably one of your patients."

"Very funny," I say.

Then things get busy. There's a

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consult in the main hospital, a suicidal patient on the Ortho floor. The Two On-Call has questions about a patient who is being rapidly neurolepticized. And a new patient comes in the E.R. An old man with his wife. He came home from the senior center today and found her standing in front of an open window, ready to jump. She meant it too. If she had a gun right now, she says. Or if she had pills. Or a knife. Her intent is lethal. It's just too much, she says. Her bowels are rotting. Her brains are putrid. Can't I smell the decay?

She won't sign in. I sit beside her in Room 6 for twenty minutes, trying to talk her into it; finally I resort to threats.

"I will. I'll send you to the state hospital if you don't sign in. You're a danger to yourself . . ."

Her husband pleads.

She signs. I finish filling out the papers, and call the floor to tell them about her. The nurse answers.

"You can't admit a patient here," she says. "We don't have any beds."

"You have a census of 14. According to the sign-out list you have one bed."

"But that's being saved for a research patient of Dr.———."

"Well, it's the last bed in the house . . ." I lie, but she catches me.

"What about 5?"

"They're only taking long-term patients. Look, I went over it with Millie—you get the first admission."

"Then you'll have to clear it with the Unit Chief."

The Unit Chief's not at home. The Associate Unit Chief's not at home. The Assistant Unit Chief is at home, and argues with me for ten minutes before I hang up.

When I bring the old lady to the floor, the nurse won't even talk to me.

"Where's the Two?" I say. "I've got to tell him about this lady."

"Find him yourself," says the nurse.

I tell her where to go.

"You'll be in trouble for this tomorrow," she says.

Half an hour later I admit a patient to 5, filling the last bed.

Midnight. I'm home. It's dark, and I'm hungry and exhausted. The newspaper is all over the floor. I find dinner on the stove; chicken in congealed juices, rice, salad wilting in its dressing.

I pile food on a plate, and sit on the couch, eating.

Right outside our window is the hospital. Across the street, cancer patients in their beds, random limbs, pots of chrysanthemums, the red blinking lights of monitors, the tangled lines of IVs. One floor down is the children's floor, where bald children sit up in bed. Their mothers visit, bringing stuffed animals. Fathers stand at the windows, staring down.

It's a strange view to have from one's living room window. And even after two years we are not used to it. But we live here. It is subsidized housing, for House Staff, cheap and, by New York standards, spacious. The best deal in town, everyone says. Still . . .

I close the venetian blinds. I sit on the couch, plate on my lap, eating.

It is quiet. Eventually I get up and put my plate in the sink.

I call the Front Desk. "You can reach me at home," I say.

The Front Desk says goodnight.

I lie in bed. The crosstown bus rumbles down the block, and pauses in front of the building, idling. The windows shudder in their frames. The bus does not move on.

I lie, looking at the ceiling.

No beds. No beds. It is not always like this. Sometimes we have a dozen beds, and no one in the Emergency Room; and Millie will call all over the City to see if anyone wants to come to our hospital. We'll take anything, anyone then.

But most of the time there are hardly any beds. Two or three empty out of a hundred. And you are turning people away, trying desperately not to fill them. Because nothing's worse than having no beds.

No beds.

I try to sleep.

I remember being a fourth-year medical student, doing an elective in psychiatry in a fancy teaching hospital in the suburbs. It was a big old Victorian asylum, with brick buildings, rolling lawns, maple and oak trees, paths through the woods. I was On Call one night with a Resident, and a man came to the hospital, trying to get his daughter admitted. It was a very fancy hospital, so fancy it didn't have an Emergency Room. Walk-in patients came into the administration building, a huge mansion with a winding staircase, and were taken to a small room off the formal living room to be interviewed.

The Resident and I saw the father and his daughter in there. She was having problems, that was clear. She needed to be in the hospital. But the first thing the Resident wanted to know was whether she had insurance.

I was shocked. Who cared if she had insurance? Shouldn't we admit her first, worry about money later?

She did, in fact, have insurance. The father pulled out a card from his wallet; but it was the wrong kind of insurance. The Resident told the father that he couldn't admit the girl: he should take her down the road, to the state hospital. The father looked upset for a moment, but he grabbed his daughter's hand, and they walked out of the mansion, across the rolling lawn, to their car, and drove away. It was a very fancy hospital.

About three a.m. the phone rings. It is the Front Desk.

"Hello, doctor."

I groan.

The doorman is sleeping in front of a flickering TV—he wakes with a start when I open the door. Outside, the air is cool, and the avenue deserted except for newspapers blowing past the bus stop. I pull my white coat close and hurry across to the hospital.

The surgeon and the medical resident are sitting at their chairs in the glass station, in the same position as three hours ago. They look stunned, exhausted—poor bastards, they're not allowed to go home at night.

The charge nurse comes up to me. She's in her thirties, with close-cropped black hair and a sensible, sensual Irish face.

"You're not going to like this one," she says.

"How come?" I say.

"Dregs of the earth," she says. "I could smell him from across the room. Carrying all sorts of crap in plastic bags—wouldn't let me take them away."

"And?"

"And what?'

"Is he crazy? Does he need to be in the hospital?"

"Oh! You'll see," she says.

"Where is he?"

"Room 6. He's talking to the walls."

"What's his name?"

"He wouldn't tell me," she says. "No I.D. either."

I sigh. I'm just about ready to turn around and go home; I couldn't have been sleeping more than an hour. My

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stomach is sour, my eyes are bleary, and I just as easily could do what some of the other Residents joke about—give him 75¢ for the bus down to Bellevue. Or even four bucks for a cab. I've never done that, of course—but I've sent a lot of people out without much more.

He stinks.

The room is full of his odor, a piss-sour smell, and he's wearing about six layers of disgustingly dirty rags, and he *is* holding a conversation with the walls—specifically with a large grease spot beside the door. He suddenly starts hopping around as if he's being slapped, then squats down low to the floor and stays there. I say hello; he doesn't move. There are deep ugly gashes on the back of his dirty arms, and his feet are swollen—but as far as I can see, not enough to justify IV antibiotics. Too bad—just a little more, an open wound, some cellulitis, a bit of osteo, and Medicine'd have to give him a bed. And they don't have to worry about catchment.

The surprise, in looking at him, is that he's young. Awfully young—with a kid's stubble, traces of acne on his cheeks. Brown eyes, with a weird, placid blankness. I search for the person behind those eyes—is he scared? I wonder. I try to feel his suffering, to imagine how horrible it must be to wander the streets of Manhattan, insane, impoverished, with nowhere to go, totally at the mercy of the worst of the city, unable to know even what reality is—but I feel nothing. I ask his name.

"Arkipestipissifullen," he says. He spits at the couch.

"What was that?"

Nothing.

"Is something bothering you?"

Nothing.

"What are you spitting at?"

Nothing.

I try everything I can think of, every interviewing technique, every approach, every question—I do about everything short of crouching on the floor with him, which I might do if the broad-faced Security guard wasn't standing outside watching. Maybe another time I could get through to him, maybe at an earlier hour, maybe if I hadn't been screaming at people all day. But no matter what I try, Mr. Arkipestipissifullen is adamant about revealing nothing to me, not even his name, as if he wants to remain what he seems at first glance, and that only—a grubby street-person that you might see pawing through a garbage can or sleeping next to a heat vent in the dead of winter. But finally he says something that sounds like Macon.

"Macon?" I say. "Macon, Georgia? You from Georgia? You're from Macon, Georgia, right?" Nothing. "You are, right?"

Nothing.

"Your name's Fullen?"

"Once it was Fullen," he says. "Then it was McDermott. Then it was Swanson. Then it was Arkipesti . . ."

"Right," I say.

This'd be time for a smoke, if I smoked, or a good stiff whisky, if I drank whisky; I leave him chanting "Arkipestipissifullen . . . Arkipestipissifullen" at the grease-spot on the wall and go to the phone.

I call Georgia.

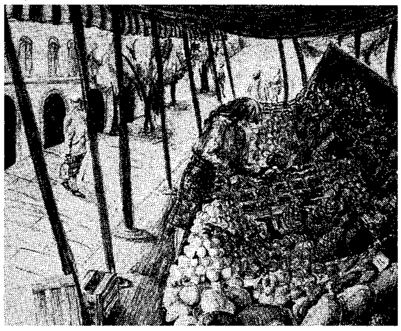
"Any Fullens in Macon?" I say.

"Not in Macon," the operator says finally. "But I see a Bill-John Fullen in Jeffersonville, that's just outside Macon."

I call. Fifteen rings before a thick, sleepy voice answers.

"Mr. Fullen?"

"Yeah? What you want?"



"I'm calling from New York . . . I've got a patient here in my Emergency Room who I think might be a relative of yours . . ."

"Yeah?"

"A man, about twenty, twenty-one. Brown hair . . ."

"Nope. Never heard of him . . . No, wait a minute, that could be my nephew Bobby." He doesn't sound too happy at the thought. "Bobby . . . he's been in one nuthouse after another. Wacko again, is he?"

"Well, he's . . . he's pretty disorganized."

"Yup, that's him. Wacko. But you don't want to talk to me, you want to talk to his mamma. But his mamma don't have a phone—you give me your number and I'll get somebody to drive on over and take her to a phone."

"Okay."

"May be a coupla hours. She's over to Stroud, that's fifty miles from here."

"Okay. But maybe you can tell me . . ."

Uncle Bill-John doesn't know a whole lot, and what he does know doesn't help much. He's just wacko, Bill-John says. Sometimes he comes back to himself, then he goes wacko again. And when he's wacko you got no choice but to lock him up, that's all there is to it. We'll lock him up, won't we? I don't know, is all I can say.

Afterwards I stare out at the dirty plastic chairs of the empty waiting area, and try to figure what I'm left with. Bipolar? Schizoaffective? Toxic? Plain old undifferentiated schiz? Whatever he is, what I've basically got here at 4:45 a.m. is a man who needs a psych bed when there aren't any psych beds in town. I've got a problem.

I call Bellevue first.

"We won't touch him," the administrator says.

"You *have* to take him. He's . . . he's an undomiciled male who's acutely psychotic. He needs admission."

"I don't have any beds. I've got people lined up in my E.R. waiting eight hours to be seen."

"I don't care. You have to take him. You're required by law to take *all* undomiciled . . ."

"Try Met," he says, and the line goes dead.

I call Metropolitan.

"Where did they find him?" the Met Resident says.

"At 60th and Fifth."

"That's not our catchment. That's Bellevue's."

"They just refused to take him."

"They *have* to take him."

"That's what I told them."

"Well, I don't have any male beds . . . and it's *their* patient. They know damn well it's their patient; anyway, they just send their excess patients to Kings County . . ."

"Those sons of bitches," I say.

I dial Bellevue again; but while I'm waiting for the operator to page the administrator, I think to myself: screw it all! screw it! I know what'll happen if I get through—we'll scream at each other for half an hour, then I'll have to call the Chief Resident or the Medical Director, and they'll call the Chief Resident or Medical Director at Bellevue; and

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they'll all scream at each other for awhile, and it'll be half a day before Mr. Fullen gets out of that stinking room and sent down to Bellevue. And then they probably won't even admit him—they'll just give him a dose of medication and send him back out. Screw it!

I hang up.

I fill out the papers, and go back in. Mr. Fullen is squatting on the floor, in the same position as when I left him.

I squat down next to him, my white coat fanning around me on the floor. Security looks in on us, grinning.

Mr. Fullen hops away, but stops when I call his name.

"I want you to sign in, Bobby," I say. I hop forward one hop, and extend my clipboard for him to sign.

We've just barely begun Morning Report with Ann, the Chief Resident, and the Two, and me, when someone pages me. I use Ann's phone to answer.

"Doctor, this is the Business Office. You admitted a Mr. Robert Fullen last night?"

"That's right."

"There's some information I need."

"Okay," I say.

"You didn't fill out his address on the admission packet."

"He doesn't have one."

"He's undomiciled?"

"Right."

"And you didn't fill out the type of insurance."

"No insurance."

"Medicaid?"

"No, nothing."

"Is he a New York resident?"

"I . . . I don't know. I think he came into town a few weeks ago."

There is a pause. Ann and the Two are talking about the first admission, the old lady.

"Anything else?" I say.

"The patient is not in our catchment area, and he has no insurance . . . I don't understand why you admitted him to this facility."

"Because it was the right thing to do."

"But you could have transferred him . . ."

"Oh, I could?"

"Yes." Business Office completely misses the tone of my voice. "He may still need to be transferred . . ."

"Look, I'm sure you people in the Business Office can figure out some way to pay for his stay, if you want to . . ."

"I . . . I don't know, doctor."

"Christ!"

There is a pause.

"Can I go?" I say.

"I will have to put on the form, 'admitted against financial advice.' "

"You do that." I slam down the phone.

"What was that all about?" Ann says.

"The third admission," I say.

"He's a real dirtball," says the Two. "The nurses threw him in the shower before they'd even talk to him . . ."

"What's the problem? Ann says.

I explain.

"It's a system problem."

"You're telling me."

"We're working on it. We have a committee of all the hospitals in the city."

"Well, you better work fast. We all spend our nights banging our heads against the wall."

The door opens: it's Adam, the Three who is On today. I give him the E.R. beeper, the message book and the bed list, which he looks at, scowling.

"No beds?" Adam says.

"Nothing at all. No discharges today, and there's one cot filled already. And a couple people scheduled to come in," I say. "Oh, and by the way, no beds in the whole city."

"Oh boy," says Adam. "How was last night?"

"The usual. Oh, there may be a patient on his way to the E.R.—a young guy from the Village, bipolar, manic . . ."

"Can we get back to Rounds?" Ann says.

"Yeah, sorry." Adam leaves, and I tell about Mr. Fullen in the E.R.

"That's nothing," says the Two, "compared to what happened once he got to the floor. I had the worst night of my life."

"Let's hear about it," says Ann.

And I sit back, and sip my coffee, oddly cheerful, all ready to hear tales of disaster.

But I'm not out of it yet. The rest of the morning, there is one call after another. You'd think I committed some kind of crime. The Unit Chief of 3 calls me out of Professor Rounds, upset that I filled his last bed with a non-research patient. The Assistant Unit Chief of 5 interrupts my long-term therapy case, upset that I admitted a "damn demented alcoholic who needs a medical workup" to his long-term adolescent floor. During noon conference there's a second call from the Business Office about Mr. Fullen's financial status. And as I'm on my way to the deli at noon, Millie stops me to say that, by the way, didn't I know I'm *not* supposed to use cots if there's not going to be another discharge in the next 24 hours—and anyway, wasn't it pretty clear that Mr. Fullen didn't meet "cot criteria"? Surely by this time of year I ought to know *that*! And the guy at the Front Desk keeps beeping me, saying the E.R. wants me. Come on, I tell him, I'm not On today—let them talk to Adam.

And then, around three o'clock, during Medication Clinic, the E.R. beeps me directly, five times in a row. So I answer.

"Hello? This is Dr. Hellerstein. Why do you keep paging me?"

"Hold on."

A nurse picks up. "Hello? We've got an outside call for you."

"I'm not On today."

"They want you. Long distance. Let me switch you over."

"Hello, doctor?" A woman's voice, with a Southern accent, a white-trash crackle in her throat. "I hear you-all found my Bobby . . ."

"Mrs. Fullen?"

"Yes, that's me. Tell me, do you have my Bobby there?"

I sigh. I look over at my patient, a schizophrenic lady who is gazing at the books on my shelves.

"Did you find him? Do you have him there?"

"For the moment," I say. "He was wandering the streets, completely crazy; somebody found him and brought him to the Emergency Room."

"He just hopped a bus right out of town," she says. "Last month he left, and we had no inkling where he'd gone to. We didn't know if he was dead or alive." She sighs, as if not sure which would be better. "You'll keep him until he's better, won't you? He needs to be kept for a long while. You'll hold on tight to my Bobby, won't you?"

"For the moment," I say. "For the moment. That's all I can promise."

"May the Lord bless you," she says. "For ever and ever and ever."

—David Hellerstein

Brief Poetry Notices

Whispering to Fool the Wind, by Alberto Rios. Sheep Meadow Press. $13.95.

☆☆☆

Williamsesque renderings of Spanish-American family and village life warmly tendered in lines where sustained enjambment often prods us to jog when we should amble. (The 1981 Walt Whitman Winner, chosen by Donald Justice)

Jurgis Petraskas, by Anthony Petrosky. Louisiana State. $12.95; $5.95 (paper).

☆☆☆½

Another moving volume of family life, this one encapsulating four generations of the poet's Lithuanian-American background. (The 1982 Walt Whitman winner, chosen by Philip Levine)

Long Walks in the Afternoon, by Margaret Gibson. Louisiana State. $12.95; $5.95 (paper).

☆☆

You could take this meandering poet along on a country trek, but you'd probably see just as sharply without her. (The 1982 Lamont Poetry Selection, chosen by June Jordan, Richard Shelton, David Wagoner)

Ruby for Grief, by Michael Burkhard. Pittsburgh. $12.95; $5.95 (paper).

☆☆☆½

Challenging and sometimes as willfully obscurantist as Ashbery's *The Tennis Court Oath*, Burkhard's collages are always worth the effort.

Memory is No Stranger, by Elizabeth Bartlett. Ohio University/Swallow. $13.95; $7.95 (paper).

☆½

"Twelve-tone poems" inspired by Schonberg's twelve-tone scale and composed of twelve couplets, each of twelve syllables. Despite the poet's somewhat convincing preface, these poems carry small emotional weight.

Antarctic Traveller, by Katha Pollitt. Knopf. $11.50; $5.95 (paper).

☆☆☆☆

Simply gorgeous poetry, deft and elegant as early Stevens. What a delight to read a poet who admits she loves feeling-as-thought.

The Yellow House on the Corner, by Rita Dove. Carnegie-Mellon. $10.95; $4.95 (paper).

☆☆☆

Dove is with the vanguard of a new Black poetry—Black and universal, her voice self-ironizing, even when meshing the personal and the social.

Going On: Selected Poems 1958-1980, by Joanne Kyger. Dutton. $12.50; $5.95 (paper).

☆½

The virtues and vices of present consciousness poetry—its spontaneity and its not infrequent *longeurs*—are well illustrated by these pages.

Dinner with Uncle Jozef, by John Pijewski. Wesleyan. $12.00; $6.95 (paper).

☆☆

Still another ethnic-family affair, less interesting as poetry but worth reading for its closely-lived-through details of Polish life.

Second Sight, by Jonathan Aaron. Harper & Row. $10.95; $5.95 (paper).

☆

Glib and precious poems of oh-so-weary alienation. (A 1982 National Poetry Series Selection, selected by Anthony Hecht)

A Wild Patience Has Taken Me This Far: Poems 1978-1981, by Adrienne Rich. $12.95; $4.95 (paper).

☆☆

Meditations which attempt to mediate the inner self and the "selves outside" of other women in memory, family, and history. Rich seems pleased to play against her good ear in favor of ragged didacticism.

The Country Between Us, by Carolyn Forché. Harper & Row. $11.50; $5.95 (paper).

☆☆☆☆

These political pieces engage in the experiences they suffer. Forché's El Salvador poems reveal her to be our best public poet since Lowell. (The 1981 Lamont Poetry Selection, chosen by William Harmon, June Jordan and Richard Shelton)

Three Clicks Left, by Katerina Gogou. Night Horn Books. $4.50 (paper).

☆

Butcher shop verse laying bare the author's life as a Communist-Anarchist in Greece. Gogou's tough-headedness is admirable, but her shaping of the materials of poetry is slight.

The Greater Leisures, by Jane Miller. Doubleday. $10.95; $5.95 (paper).

☆☆

Work appealing in its sometimes Poundian imperatives and disjunctive wistfulness. Miller is also capable of a pseudo-hip tone which is the way the Moral Majority thinks poets talk.

The Forces of Plenty, by Ellen Bryant Voigt. Norton. $15.50; $5.95 (paper).

☆☆☆☆

Euphonious and laconic, these superbly crafted poems of loss and plenitude in the natural and human world are rooted firmly in the heart. Whatever she touches, Voigt embraces.

SAN FRANCISCO:

BANKAMERICA

M. Halberstadt

KENNETH LASH

URBAN CHANGE

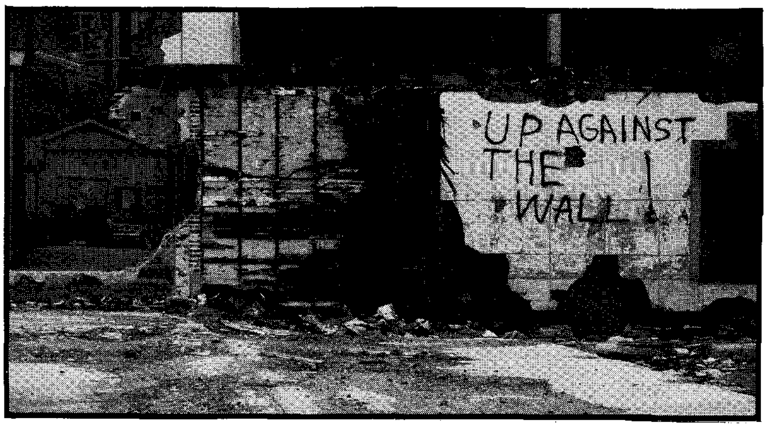
Urban change is glaring almost everywhere in the United States—even in the imitative villages. Politicians have made a picnic of it, sociologists and statisticians a banquet; fiction writers let it age to round wine and vinegar. Everyone talks of such change, most often in terms of "I could have bought it for . . ." or "It didn't used to be like that. . . ." The kind of comment that once characterized the elderly now falls naturally from the quick lips of thirty-year-olds. History, right from the start in the United States moving in time-spans other than those elsewhere extant, has now shifted into a further acceleration that renders decades inappropriate as a measuring device. High school kids indulge in nostalgia.

Personal opinions of change are inevitably judgmental. Time does things to us and our surrounds that we like or don't. (How can the elderly be expected to like it?) So in most of the essays and reminiscences that make up this section on change in San Francisco, judgments are made or implied. But the editorial intent was to portray, not to judge. There is no attempt at the kind of investigative thoroughness that would justify inclusive judgment.

We chose San Francisco as exemplar of urban change for a number of reasons. It is probably the most interesting and change-full of our cities, and certainly the most beautiful. Its very beauty of place, as Bernard Mayes points out, makes any physical change rise sharply to the eye. Because of its relatively small size both geographically and in terms of population (approximately 750,000), change of any kind is more readily apparent than in less concentrated cities. Further, its history of tolerance first made San Francisco hospitable to social change, later a kind of object of such change. From the early days of Beats and flower children, it became the place to go if you wanted to be in on social change or simply to benefit from aspects of it. The growth in gay population is an example, now according to estimates some 150-200,000. (Daniel Curzon gives us the why of it, along with the what's what.)

Different aspects of the city and its changings preoccupy the contributors, and they speak in different tones, which is something we had hoped for. Some harmony of response, some dissonance. Some coincidence: Beth Coffelt chose William Wiley's work as pivotal for change in the visual art scene before knowing that we were using a Wiley work as cover for this issue. Some disappointments: writers who wanted to contribute but were too harrassed with other deadlines to meet ours. (Perhaps a piece or two will straggle along in a later issue.)

Aside from the sight and sounds of change in San Francisco, no particular focus was asked of the contributors, no particular structure was being assembled. If by chance a coherent view or set of facts and feelings eventuated, fine—we might catch some of the many faces of urban change. In part, we did.



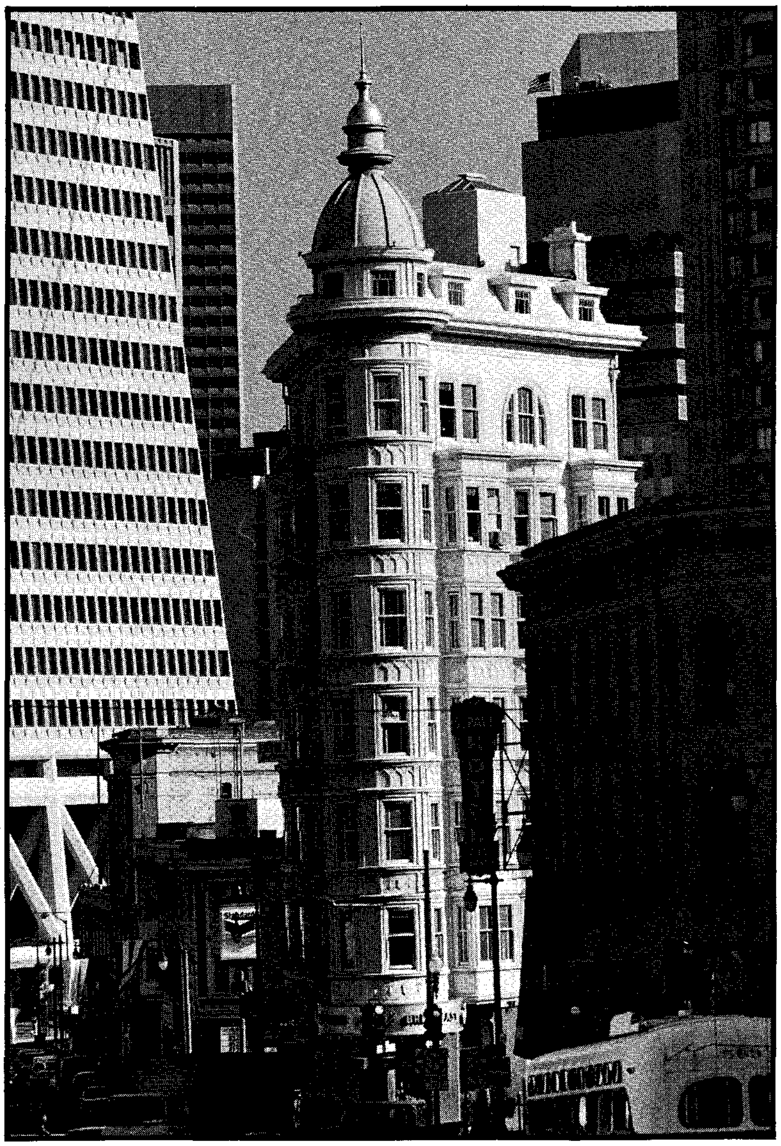
M. Halberstadt

For one thing, the seesaw nature of change comes out—one part up, a corresponding part down. No gain without loss. Sully, Buryn, Peterson, Mayes contribute to that picture. The irony of change, including its occasional sad humor, shows up in McDonald's piece on Lone Mountain College. The energy that change releases in the arts (Art progresses by a series of destructions, Picasso said) shows in Coffelt on visual art and Hurwitt and Weiner on the San Francisco theatre. The effect of

"San Francisco. . . . Once the prospector, now the citizen of a new world, setting up camp here full of reckless energy . . ."

post-industrial economics on class structure is traced by Ciabattari; the perhaps surprising role of the clergy in both innovating and working for tolerance of change is detailed by Alvarez and Mayes. Nowicki shows us a strong woman mayor confronting forces for change.

I lived eleven years (1959-70) in the Bay Area; I return to visit every year. And each year it moves farther away from me, becomes less the environment I lived and worked in. That's to be expected these days, but what I didn't expect is the rapidity and extent of the change. It seems to be increasing geometrically, doubling itself year by year. It cuckoos my clock, throws my time sense awry. In a stable society, time stretches out toward a visible horizon. People are carried along as if on a slowly moving carrier, all together toward the same end. In a rapidly changing society people are milling around on the carrier, jumping off, going backward as well as forward, pushing and shoving. The atmosphere is a mist of anticipation and regret. Time stretches out diurnally when there's a lot going on; it shrinks in terms of years, however—it flies away. Slow fruition disappears; that sense of time is lost. The steady passing of landmarks gives way to daily event, to the kaleidoscope of "new." The human moves farther and farther away from the rest of nature. It's a nervous situation. Our cities are very nervous places. The great calm of the bay, the bridges, the fog, the enfolding hills seems less to modify than to italicize change as it has come to San Francisco. Once the prospector, now the citizen of a new world, setting up camp here, full of reckless energy and the innocence of the in-turned. ☐



Lawrence Sturhahn

The essays on the following forty-odd pages were compiled by Kenneth Lash, contributing editor and a regular NAR columnist. Design is by Roy R. Behrens.

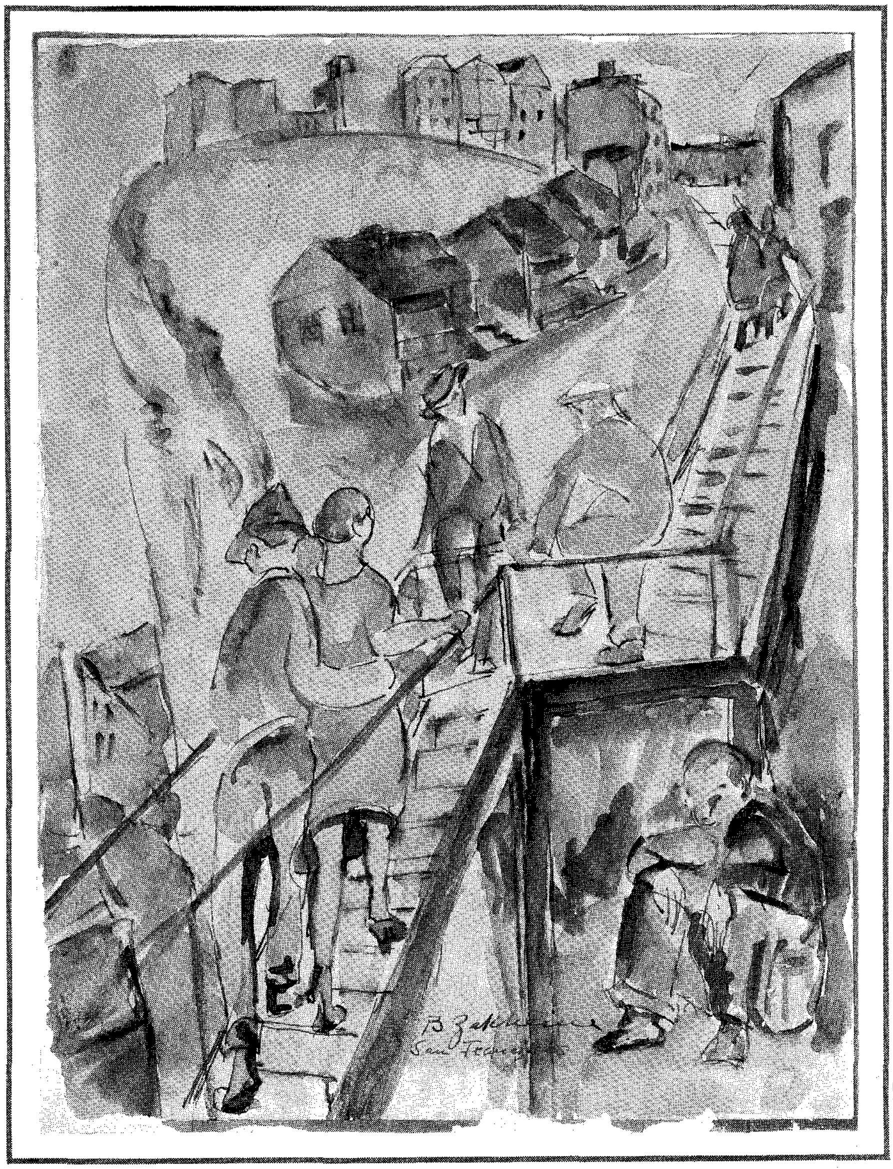
ELEANOR SULLY

REMEMBERING TELEGRAPH HILL

San Francisco like Rome was built on seven hills. In 1983 it's not so easy to count them, for if you look at the skyline from across the bay, Berkeley-side, the character of a hill city has almost disappeared behind the clustering towers of high-rise buildings. Russian Hill, Nob Hill, Telegraph Hill are indistinguishable.

When I was young my hill was Telegraph. In full flight from a Presbyterian past, I met a man who painted relentlessly abstract canvases and fell in love with him. The two of us moved into an apartment which fronted on the Filbert Street steps descending from Montgomery Street to Sansome. We occupied the entire first floor. Our Italian landlady, Mrs. Bellardi, lived on the top floor with her two teenage daughters. Her husband, she told me later, had been killed when he fell down a chute at the Planter's peanut factory.

The house was old and in need of paint, standing taller than its neighbors at the corner of Filbert and Napier Lane. Neither was a proper street. Our front yard was a wooden-floored landing where we had potted plants and two straw mats for sitting or sunbathing. Later, Telegraph Hill was planted by a woman of dedication who turned it into a lush botanical wonder, but in those days the hillside was covered in wild grasses, weeds, and a few marijuana plants growing down to the naked rock of the cliff below. The Filbert Street stairway hung from the brow of Montgomery following the steep drop of the cliff, so narrow and fragile it might have been the construction of some giant spider. Friends uptown worried about our safety, as well they might have. I remember the time I broke an ankle and had to go to the hospital to get it taped. Two stalwarts made a four-arm seat for me and carried me down to Sansome Street and public transportation.



Bernard Zackheim

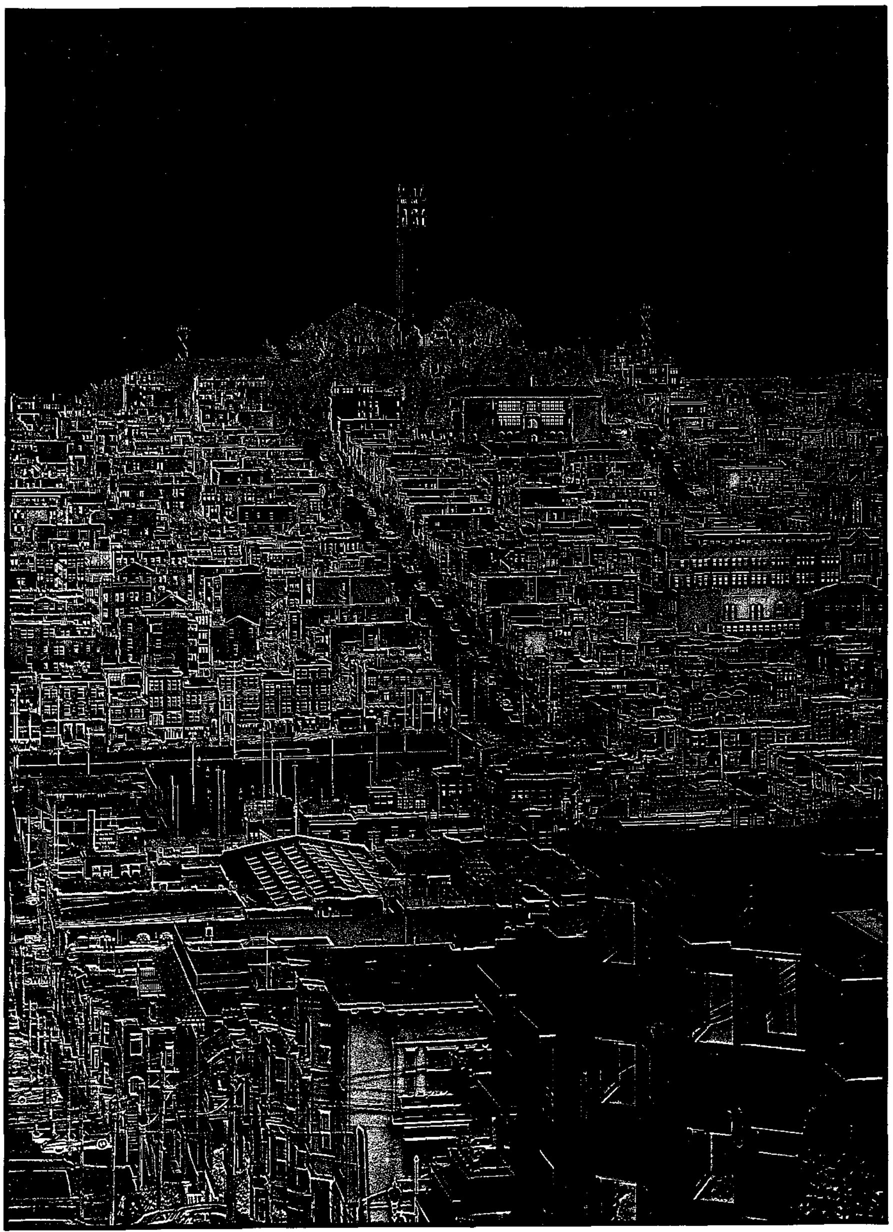
"We were young. Our ambitions were intense but had nothing to do with making money . . . ."

Our apartment had a double living room that extended across the entire front of the house, with an arch in the middle where there must once have been sliding doors. In the rear we had a large bedroom, its windows opening on an alleyway intimate with the house next door. Anytime we woke up with a hangover, our next-door neighbor would put his head through the window for morning words of sympathy.

We had an old-fashioned kitchen full of space; the back door opened to a hall with stairs to the upper floor and an exit to Napier. No refrigerator, but a "cooler" suspended outside the window. Our heating system was a hideous gas heater in the front room, painted a fake mahogany, and, when it got really chilly, the gas oven in the kitchen. Inserted into a large closet off the bedroom was the bathroom with a claw-foot tub and a wash basin. The toilet was outside in the hall—usually as cold as the cooler. All the floors in the house ran downhill, as if the whole house leaned toward the bay. The ceilings were high. The windows let in the afternoon sun. The rent was twenty-four dollars a month.

The Hill as we used to call it (some people still do) was our private island, lapped by the currents of the city but remote from them. We were a small, self-sufficient society bound together by love of each other and of painting, sculpture, literature, theater and the views. Artists and writers of varying talent were our friends, the élite unemployed. Some of them became well-known. Bill Saroyan used to hang out at our house or at Izzy's bar down on Pacific. Kenneth Rexroth lived his domestic life mid-town, but he spent most of his talking-time on the Hill. Benny Bufano slept often on the couch in our living room, dreaming of the mammoth Saint Francis he wanted to place on the heights of Twin Peaks. I remember the night his studio burned down, a space over a garage out near Lone Mountain. Nearly all his smaller sculptures and his drawings were incinerated. He stayed at our place for a week when he had no place else to go, and I heard him that first night sobbing in the dark on the other side of the bedroom door.

No one had much money, but food was cheap and Spediacci's grocery at the top of Union Street carried customers on credit until somebody sold something or went to work for the WPA. Red wine was cheap too. The Italians who lived down the hill toward North Beach made their own wine, treading grapes in the cellar. Or



M. Halberstadt

"A young woman named Lucy Gledhill went out one evening to shoot down the Coit tower . . ."

they made grappa, a near-lethal brandy distilled from the leavings—skin, seeds and pulp. They sold it to us for our parties for a dollar or two a gallon. And for special occasions, we could always go down to the bay to catch illegal crabs and bring them home nipping at each other in a large paper sack.

We had parties at the drop of any excuse. We didn't go to the movies. We did go to the theater, usually the kind known as "little," to see our friends who were actors. Sometimes we all went down to Izzy's or the Black Cat opposite the "Monkey Block" where a kindred group of artists lived in small rooms at cheap rent. But most of our evenings were spent talking or playing games and musical instruments, singing, dancing, and kissing. Naturally there were certain sexual pecadillos; an early version of wife-swapping was popular and occasionally a jealous mate broke up a party with attempted mayhem. But, as I look back now, it was a remarkably innocent society.

Although we considered ourselves radicals and rebels, most of us were apolitical. A few were "reds" and talked at parties about unions and dialectical materialism. I remember a woman named Myrto who sang union songs, accompanying herself on the guitar. I recall only one line from one of her lyrics delivered in a burlesque Yiddish accent—"The cloakmakers' union is a no-gooda union/ it's a company union by the boss." I also remember a friend of hers telling me Myrto had the most beautiful nipples he'd ever seen. "They're pink," he said. "Most women have brown nipples, but Myrto's are pink." All of us were politicized eventually by Harry Bridges and the Longshoremen's Union or by the WPA, but we remained literary about the problems of the world.

I don't remember that there were any Third-World members of our group. (The term hadn't yet been invented.) We were white, not necessarily Anglo-Saxon, irreligious. A few were from working class backgrounds but most of us were from the middle middle-class. We were young. Our ambitions were intense but had nothing to do with making money. We didn't own cars or houses. No radios, television sets, electric clocks, washers or dryers. The men rarely held steady jobs. If anyone worked, it was the women. I don't know why this was true—possibly because the women were willing to take on piecemeal jobs which the men considered beneath their dignity. This was true at least until the federal arts projects came along and all the artists and writers went to work.

When the Coit Tower was erected in the middle of the depression, all the Telegraph Hill artists denounced it roundly. They protested its location, its shape, and its height. A young woman named Lucy Gledhill, who ran a cafe on Union and Montgomery called "The Dead Fish," got her name in the papers by going out one evening with a shotgun to shoot it down. (She did not accomplish her purpose.) But by the late 'thirties when the Works Progress Administration commissioned these same artists to do murals on the interior walls, they were mollified. The painters had enough to eat for several years and Lillie Hitchcock Coit's tower became a San Francisco legend.

Lillie in life was a fire buff and attached herself to the gallant firefighters of San Francisco. She became the mascot of Knickerbocker Company #5 and was presented by them with a diamond-studded gold badge. It was told that she had the Knickerbocker Company's name embroidered on her underwear. When she died her will left a substantial sum to the city for a memorial to the volunteer firemen of the last century and the Coit Tower was built. The tower is a fluted concrete column 175 feet high, designed by architect Arthur Brown, Jr. It stands on the topmost peak of Telegraph Hill. At the time it was built one read in the press that the design was intended to represent the nozzle of a gigantic firehose. There were also any number of sniggering jokes by Herb Caen and others about its monumental phallism.

Since then the Hill has changed even more than the view from Berkeley. Last spring I drove to San Francisco and up to the Coit Tower in a mood of nostalgia. I went inside to look at the frescoes which line the main floor lobby, a length of stairway, and a corridor on the second floor. They were painted by the people I used to know. Some have acquired several generations of graffiti, some have faded, but they're still impressive. Bernard Zakheim, Lucien Labaudt, Ray Boynton, Ralph Stackpole, John Langley Howard, Jane Berlandina.

I left the car parked and walked down to Montgomery approaching the Filbert Street steps. The stairway has been stabilized with concrete, the steps are broader and they have new railings. A number of the miniature houses that used to descend in a line opposite the stairs have been torn down. Nearly all the old houses on Montgomery, on Napier Lane and down the stairs to where the cliff drops away in sheer rock have been remodeled or replaced. The artists are long gone, driven out by high rise and high rent. They've moved to Potrero Hill and Noe Valley or left San Francisco for Bodega Bay and Benicia. Saroyan died in Fresno, Rexroth in Santa Barbara. The only writers who live on the Hill now are journalists like Herb Caen and Armistead Maupin, who keeps turning out those tacky "Tales of the City."

I walked down the steps to the house where I used to live. The exterior has been stuccoed, there are ironwork grilles in the windows. I had a moment's impulse to ring the doorbell and look in at the first floor apartment, but then I knew I didn't want to see it. I went on down past several houses toward Sansome Street. The old brick warehouses have given way to the offices, the restaurants, and the boutiques of Levi Plaza built by blue jeans and a talented architect. The trolley which I used to travel down Sansome to Market is gone too. Out of breath, I climbed up the stairs and back to the Coit Tower. It was the tallest thing around when I lived on Filbert Street; it doesn't seem tall anymore. □

THE FRONTIER SPIRIT

BERNARD MAYES

In 1981 five men and two women proceeded solemnly down the Nave of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. In the course of the long and rambling ceremony which followed before an audience which half filled that immense memorial to railroad wealth, they were received at the High Altar by no less a personage than the Bishop of California, who formally commissioned them as "Parsons."

Though the liturgy was traditionally long-winded, it was dramatic because the office for which these postulants were commissioned is more revolutionary than its title suggests. "The Parsonage" is the first major effort by an international denomination (Anglican) to come to grips with the theological and doctrinal questions raised by modern discoveries in the field of sexuality.

The men and women who have been commissioned since the Parsonage was dedicated more than two years ago, some fifty-three of them, are nearly all acknowledged homosexuals. They include lawyers, doctors, secretaries, teamsters, and even priests. Their official task, no light one, is to find ways to reconcile the Church to the newly discovered existence of homosexuality as a scientific fact of possibly genetic origins, rather than merely a "chosen life-style."

The event was certainly significant, but not unusual for San Francisco, which has incubated and exported in its hundred-year history more social reforms than possibly any other major Western city. Its people have set trends which reach out into the world. Within a few months of the opening of the Parsonage, this new frontier, it was visited by an emissary from the Archbishop of Canterbury.

San Francisco was also the first major American city to recall its handguns; its streets were the first to rumble with demonstrations against the Vietnam war; it was a Holy Grail for thousands of teenagers searching for freedom of expression, and before them its poets and painters gave voice to the right to withdraw, to follow one's own light.

But the city is as much the home of lost causes as it is the nurse of new hope, and the paradox it accordingly presents is curiously religious: the search for new meaning in the unfolding of contemporary history, a search characteristic of any frontier. The glitter of skyscrapers is deceptive. The town is still a frontier community where individuality is as prized as being in debt.

It was no accident that certain of San Francisco's clergy not only reflected but led many of the boat-rocking movements of the 'sixties and 'seventies. Predecessors had rocked the boat during San Francisco's labor disputes in the '30s; later they led a battle for racial rights; ten years ago they were in the forefront of anti-war demonstrations; it was San Francisco clergy who sought changes in the anti-suicide laws, set up the nation's first social welfare hot line, and were among those arrested for consorting with drag queens at the historic Hilton Ball.

But the spiritual threads which run through so much of San Francisco's social labyrinth are not all shimmering guides to happier hunting grounds. Sometimes, as in the case of the Peoples' Temple and its Reverend Jim Jones, they led to the Minotaur itself. Drug-induced sermons were often the powerful stimulants to complete infatuation, attracting astute politicians and ordinarily hard-eyed Washington civil servants as well as the disenfranchised and the starry intellectual. Insidious tyrannies produced horrifying examples of idealism run amok, a kind of ghastly foreshadowing of that element in frontier life billboarded by Charles Manson and his murderous girls, and later by the bizarre burning of the Symbionese Liberation Army.

Set against these and other obscenities must be the endless creative experiments in the arts and social sciences conducted by the eighty or so theatrical groups, the more than two hundred social welfare, inter-personal, consciousness-raising workshops going on day in day out in homes, schools, churches, hotels, in unused warehouses, even, ironically enough, in refurbished army barracks.

Involved in all these activities, let alone in the pioneering research into Cancer, Arthritis, the Brain, Fertility, Communications, Computers, Space Colonies, and so on, are thousands of people for whom questions about the meaning of life are both serious and exciting, central

Ed Buryn

to existence. Many are looking not for glib placebos but for the chance to probe deeper than most humans have yet done into uncharted areas of living. Again, historic frontiers. Almost daily in San Francisco there is news of yet another discovery, another invention to circumvent some age-old problem. It is no accident that the place is also a haven for fugitives from institutional and social malaise; it is also no accident that there are more Nobel prize winners collected in the San Francisco area than anywhere else.

But frontiers are lonely places. The "loners" who gravitate there come as pilgrims: all that keeps them going is the dream before them or the nightmare they left behind. Accordingly, life takes on a frantic quality. The vaunted sophistication is a veneer, an exhibition of what the search is for and not of what has been found. This in turn produces a degree of desperation, of repressed but constant anxiety that perhaps life may be lived out without ever having revealed the answer—stability, permanence, or deep-rooted cultural values.

Sadly, the frontier can never offer such consolations, almost by definition. Certainly individuality, the intense need to be free of restraint, without which discovery, invention, voyages into the unknown are often impossible, and which is a built-in characteristic of San Francisco life, also brings with it a cavalier attitude towards the very stability that would help make the fruits of discovery enjoyable.

"A small town . . . , San Francisco seems a prettier jewel because its setting is so generous and golden. . . ."

It has been a hundred years now since the miners spent their lives digging for the silver which went to fill in San Francisco Bay and build the modern city. They hoped for Nirvana, Ophir, the end of the rainbow, but for the most part remained poor and died broken. Today's city retains some of the temporary look of those days. It still seems to its visitors as if it could be blown away. Even its skyscrapers have a whimsical air. The rest of the city, with its painted facades made plausible by Victorian gingerbread tacked on to what are little better than boxes, has a pathetic pretension. "String it up, and if it works, leave it," has long been the motto of the local electric company whose festoons of cable and forest of poles give *"the city is the home of lost causes . . . , the nurse of new hope . . ."*

Are You Well Enough

Lawrence Sturhahn

the city an air of being tied together with string. The main dividing thoroughfare of the city, once a muddy main-street, was long a ticky-tack of discount stores, old movie houses gone to seed, saloons, hot dog parlors, traversed by ranks of trolley cars heaving and hanging beneath antiquated wires. A "beautification" plan has taken a decade to develop and is constantly threatened by a fickle public.

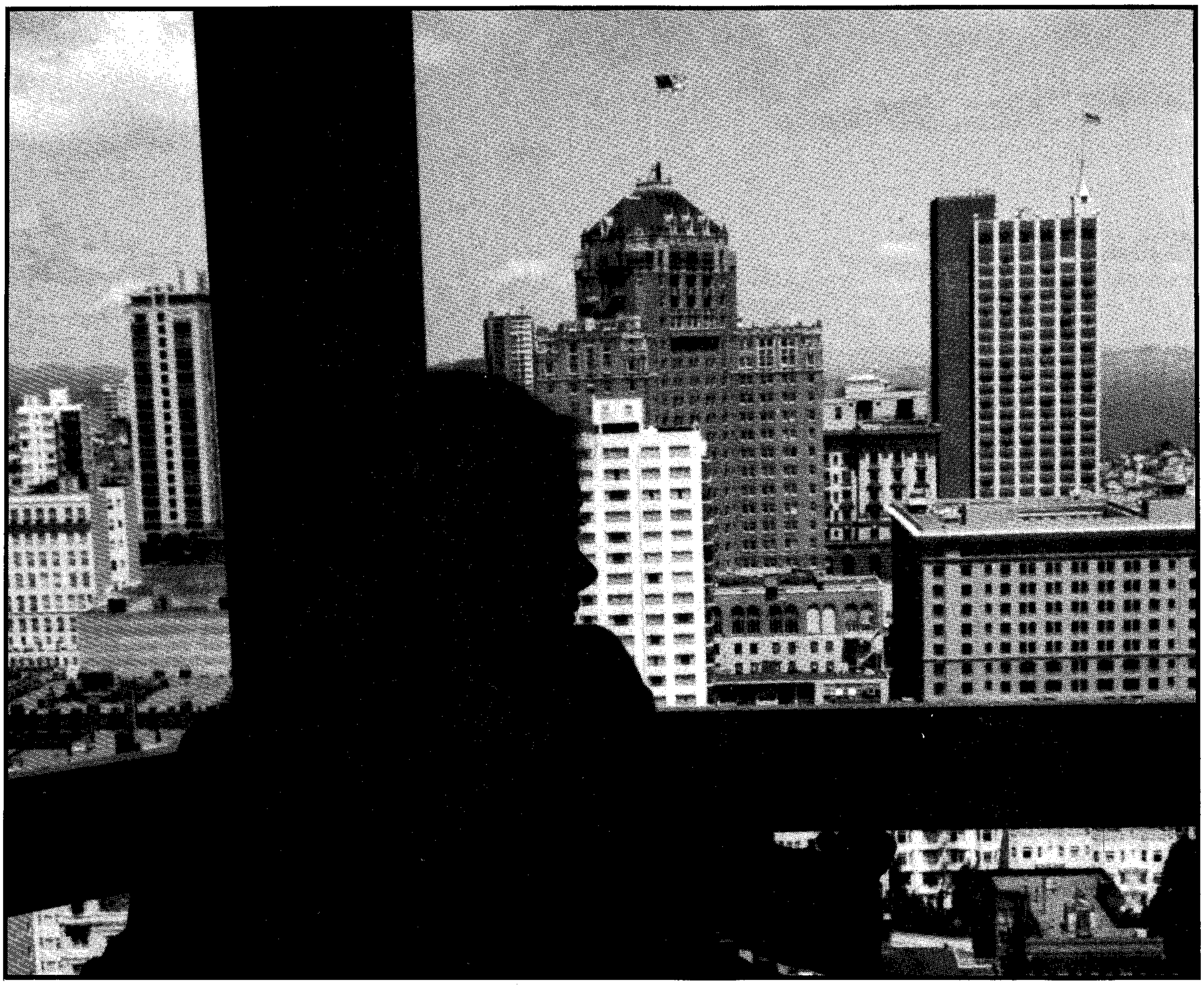
A small town as the world's cities go, with little of the solid magnificence of Rome, London, or Paris, it seems a prettier jewel because its setting is so generous and golden. But until the frontier moves on—as it is already beginning to do—westward across the ocean to Japan, China, Australia and the South Pacific, it is apt to remain much as it is.

Perhaps it is these spiritual searchings and probings, these interminable dissatisfactions, which are the cause of the endless social turbulence for which San Francisco is a by-word among Washington agencies. Indeed it is the large number of self-conscious minority groups in the city—racial, sexual, ethnic, social, religious—which have set standards and offered models for civil rights rules and regulations throughout the U.S. Dissension and the right to question authority have thus become a way of life of which her citizens are proud as part of their own personal struggles for recognition and self-esteem.

So it is little wonder that the FBI and CIA have often looked at San Francisco as a hotbed of radicalism, rich in dangerous misfits. Aside from the passenger, the voyeur, or the fellow-traveler, the frontier mainly attracts harder workers than can be found most other places—independent, self-generating, acquisitive, and also equipped with those odd quirks and fancies which make them "characters" within a scene which, were it not set in California, might certainly be thought "revolutionary." But if these are the "nuts" of the frontier they are also its bolts, for this is a place which is a sort of National Resource, forever incomplete, held together by people who will never be content. And it is true for most that, once having come here, once having lived here, they can never be the same again—just as the city has never been since they arrived. □

DANIEL CURZON

WHY WE CAME TO SODOM



We came to San Francisco from the Midwest, from the South, from foreign countries, even from so-called sophisticated New York City in the 1970s because it was Mecca, or at least it was trying to be. Most of us had grown up in an environment where our sexual desires not only weren't approved of, they were held in contempt. We couldn't share our romantic or sexual joys and sorrows with our families, our priests, many times even with our best friends. There was no sense of community, as with blacks or Jews or other ethnic and racial minorities. There was no sense that we had a right even to complain or change attitudes. After all, weren't we horrible perverts who deserved being fired, blackmailed, and hated?

Supposedly in June of 1969 all that had started to change at the Stonewall Rebellion in NYC when a few dozen homosexuals stood up and fought back when the police made one of their usual raids on a gay bar. Actually most of us had never heard of Stonewall then. But obviously something was in the air, perhaps inspired by the black and women's movements. If they could ask for more, then why couldn't we? Some of us were even writing books (like my *Something You Do in the Dark*, [Putnam, 1971]) that captured the growing sense of outrage over what we'd been forced to endure and still had to endure merely because we were sexually different, no matter what individual abilities we might have.

So San Francisco, always a liberal town, with its Gold Rush days and its seaport shenanigans behind it, became the place to go, and like Lot's wife we looked at it with considerable interest. But we didn't turn to salt, for here we could be ourselves; here we could be free—or relatively free. The police harassed us, of course; gay-bashers attacked; we were still sneered at and ridiculed in the press, still seen as exotic, dangerous creatures by many. But the black paint was coming off the windows of the gay bars, and, lo, the world could look in at us and we could look out at it! We were wearing Levi's and flight jackets, sporting mustaches and beards—the "clone" look—and thus telling each other there was a community being created here. Other communities were wearing their business suits or black trousers and shirts buttoned at the neck, and now we had ours too. The gays were getting their act together, moving into three districts in particular (the Castro, Polk Street, and South of Market) in considerable numbers, renting apartments, forming friendships, finding lovers, becoming a major social and (maybe) political force in the city.

A few daring souls even did the unthinkable and held hands in public!

It was a wonderful time to be gay, probably the best in the history of the world, for we were part of a major revolution in ethics, in the way the world would define "morality" and "immorality." It was no longer Sin and Degradation, but Gay Pride. Sure, sometimes the pride was a bit forced, but just look at those Gay Freedom Day Parades in late June. Half a million people turned out for those. They were bigger than the Chinese New Year Parade, second only to the Rose Bowl, even if the media always concentrated on flamboyant drag queens when it didn't ignore the phenomenon altogether. If that wasn't Gay Pride, what was?

State Senator Briggs tried to get a bill passed forbidding homosexual teachers, and we took him on—and won! Anita Bryant refused to let go of the old child-molester lies and carried on about the homosexuals. We took her on—and lost a number of elections in other cities, but not in San Francisco! It actually became a law that it was wrong to discriminate against gays. Many non-gays felt deracinated, and not just the old; the young in some ways were the worst. How could this be happening? Surely it couldn't be wrong to hate and abuse queers? That's what they were for, weren't they?

How many of us were in SF by then—100,000? More? Probably. We were forming political clubs. Candidates for mayor and the city council came to address our groups and seek our votes—even Republicans! Eventually an open gay even got elected himself. Harvey Milk won a seat on the Board of Supervisors. How bizarre! What was the world coming to!

Of course the gay Supervisor was assassinated within a year by another Supervisor, Dan White, the ex-cop, ex-fireman who had been the only Supervisor to oppose the gay rights ordinance. Dan White served only five years for this killing (and the killing of the mayor as well). Could it be that we hadn't come as far as we thought we had? Could it be that the old boy forces had reconnoitered and said, "We'll change this queer-loving, liberal trend any way we have to? The homos won't do anything about it anyway because they're chickenshit."

But we did something about it. Not much, but something. We milled outside City Hall on May 21, 1979, after the lenient sentence for assassin White was announced, until eventually some of us broke some windows and then burned up nine police cars. It was a heady experience, though the tear gas stung and the riot squad cracked some of our heads. In fact, it was wonderful. We were a force to be reckoned with, weren't we? We weren't going to be pushed around anymore and we *weren't* going away!

But did we really have any power? Faggots breaking windows at City Hall were still on the *outside*; they weren't making the decisions. Maybe this Gay Power was more apparent than real? Officials felt obliged to have gay or lesbian assistants, yes, but the mayor could oppose minimal spousal rights (like shared medical insurance) for unmarried couples (read *gays*) and get away with it. Come now, we couldn't really expect equality in ten or twelve years after thousands of years of hostility and oppression, could we? What optimists! Oh, sure, outside San Francisco facile reporters were saying how everybody in town was gay and we were taking over; it wasn't true, since even the gays (still a minority) could barely agree on anything; after all, we were men and women, black and white, yellow and red, conservative and moderate, radical and indifferent, job-oriented, creative, and dull, just like everybody else. Only when the homophobes came down on us did we band together and get attention with our efforts to "take over the world." Take over the world? The world was smothering from overpopulation and the gays were about to take it over? Incredible. Yet long-despised groups have a hard time overcoming the old notions about them; the rest of the world apparently needs queers, needs its scapegoats. Could it be that queers (oops, "the gay community") serve better than most, because members of other minorities can call them names and look down on them?

"How could this be happening? Surely it couldn't be wrong to . . . abuse queers?"

Naturally, all the while we were organizing as a community and working in our jobs and fighting off the demons of the past and the devils of the present, we were out there getting it on with our brothers. (Even some lesbians didn't stay home all day with their lovers, I've been told.) Why wouldn't we? Here we were in the midst of all these gorgeous men, trim and fit and horny, and we were supposed to settle for one lover for all time? Come on! The straights were out there on the sexual make too, right? So we went to bars and cruised and had lots of one-night stands; we went to backrooms and had lovely orgasms and anonymous kisses; we went to the baths and made love and talked afterwards and met hundreds of men we would never have talked to otherwise. Oh yeah, we fell in love too and made our nests just like most people, but many among us had time for some extra-curricular sex as well. It was terrific. All that sexual starvation, all those terrible experiences and frustrations were being compensated for at last! You think most straight men wouldn't have taken the opportunities if they could have gotten multiple orgasms from multiple partners without having to pay for them? How much you want to bet?

Then the crabs, hepatitis, gonorrhea, and parasites we got had to have their day too. They were actually a small price to pay to get away temporarily from the pains, the dull or hard work, the joylessness of most human lives. Besides, that's what penicillin was for, wasn't it?

And then came AIDS, and this was something new. It killed. It was probably a virus, the experts said, and it was spread through sexual contact, somehow through the blood. So of course everybody jumped on his or her hobbyhorse and began spouting theories about the wages of sin or the wages of being sexually incorrect. Meantime, 2400 people (mostly gay men) came down with AIDS, and as of this moment some 800 of them have died. "Ah-ha!" said the Bible-thumpers. "We told you so!" "I'm going to have to re-think my relationship with my gay friends," said the former liberals. "Can they give it to us?" said most people.

Suddenly all the old fears were reawakened. Would it be okay to be anti-gay again? (Not that the vast bulk of the world hadn't remained resolutely so all through this little renaissance in San Francisco.) Would we be quarantined? Would our sex places be closed? Would the few thousands of us who had dared to emerge from the closet be forced back in out of shame at being connected with this killer disease? Would gay rights ordinances be rescinded and we'd be back to the bad old days, frightened of being discovered, fired, blackmailed, murdered?

That's where the issue now stands, actually. Was the San Francisco Phenomenon a significant social and moral change, or merely one of the briefest renaissances in history? We don't know the answer yet.

There's hope that people will be smart enough to realize that AIDS is a result of inadequate medicine, not the result of inadequate "morality." Yet some of us remain cynical about the ability of large segments of the human race to see beyond primitive notions of chastity, virginity, and monogamy. These are the only way science-poor peoples know to control venereal diseases. The prices paid in sexual frustration and unhappy sexual partnerships obviously may be as great as the prices paid for "promiscuity," but it's amazing how quickly some fall back on Old Testament taboos on sexual behavior, just the way some people discipline their children by slapping their hands and yelling "Dirty!" rather than explaining the laws of hygiene to them. However, some of us aren't children and won't go back to the old days. We think there will be a cure for AIDS, and fairly soon, just as there have been cures for tuberculosis and smallpox and syphilis. We won't let the old equation of sex and death reassert itself. We won't let the old guilts find new expression merely for lack of a vaccine. There's been far too much of this ignorance in the history of humanity, much of it keeping people from venturing more than a few mental yards from their kitchens, from supplementing the bare achievements of their penny-pinched lives. We won't go back to the past. We'll just have to learn to destroy microbes. We finally dared to love our fellow men openly—and frequently—and that's worth any risk.

We may even learn that the original taboo about homosexuality sprang from an earlier outburst of AIDS or some such disease that in those days could only be handled through scare tactics and prohibition.

If it should happen that the cures for AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases do not come in our lifetime, then a good many of us will die with the hope that our children will live a better, a richer, more diverse life. That's right—our children. For the gay ghettos of San Francisco have spawned a new phenomenon: pregnant lesbians carrying the offspring of gay fathers. I myself have now sired a child. We are turning out to be, as we always knew, not so different after all. We didn't get all we wanted from life and we hope our children will do better. I just pray my boy doesn't turn out to be a little macho warmonger who goes around beating up the sissies. I hope that he becomes a child prodigy, preferably in science, and discovers a cure for AIDS, as well as how to be happier than his daddy was. □

RON NOWICKI

SAN FRANCISCO POLITICS:

THE FEINSTEIN ERA

Not since the reign of Joe Alioto (1968-1976) has San Francisco had a mayor in as strong a position as the incumbent, Dianne Feinstein. As we headed toward the mayoral election of November 1983, there was not a single figure from any party who loomed as a challenger, let alone a threat. On the last day of filing in September, five citizens, totally unknown in City politics, finally registered to run against Feinstein. None of them stood a ghost of a chance. No well-known Democrats had offered a challenge to their party leader, and the City's Republicans had not put forth anyone who could have been considered a serious candidate. Thus, Feinstein was expected to win in a cakewalk (as were the sheriff and the district attorney, who also went to the lists without any serious challengers to be concerned about).*

So, as Marlon Brando said in *The Godfather*, "How did we come to this . . . ?" An analysis of the City's politics since the end of World War II is a subject more fitting for a book than an article. But it can be noted here that San Francisco for many years was known as a blue collar town, strong on unions, particularly in the maritime trades. And Alioto was a union's man, at least on the surface. But slowly, over the past three decades, the combined powers of the City's unions have faded, until this day when there is no union figure as powerful as the legendary longshoreman Harry Bridges. Progress has caught up and passed blue collar workers, not only in San Francisco, but across the United States. During World War II, San Francisco was a big naval center and the Bay Area was home to a number of defense plants, but those disappeared after the war, and one by one the large military bases were either shut down or had their populations severely reduced. San Francisco's port, once one of the most heavily traveled in the United States, was lost to Oakland through a combination of mismanagement and a drastic drop in seatravel after the war. (The port has recently shown some signs of revival.)

Perhaps one of the largest factors in the displacement of unions and their blue collar fellows in the San Francisco Bay Area has been the incredible growth of the computer industry. This is one segment of America's work force that is not unionized, and no strong movement to make it so is looming. Computer workers are highly skilled, highly paid—or at least paid well enough so they don't agitate to be organized. It is not an industry that requires brute strength, it does demand a certain amount of education and skill, and it is not one for which workers of a certain age from the older industries can be easily retrained. Thus, a combination of events since the end of World War II has contributed to the white-collaring of San Francisco, the corresponding dilution of union strength, and the importance of a number of so-called special-interest groups—some, like the gay community, attracted here by the City's alleged live-and-let-live policy.

Because of its position as gateway to the Orient, San

**In fact, Mayor Feinstein was re-elected by a landslide in the November 8th election.*

Francisco has attracted large numbers of immigrants from China, Japan, Korea, and the Pacific Rim nations. Additionally, its proximity to Mexico and the Southwest has made San Francisco attractive to Hispanic groups. Thus, Caucasians now make up slightly more than half of the City's population. San Francisco's public school system reflects this mix, for in the last census (1980), more than half the pupils were of minority families, including black Americans. (Despite its reputation as a liberal bastion, San Francisco has only this year finally complied with an order to desegregate its public schools, and even so, the School Board's methods of compliance are being challenged by the black community.) Blacks were probably attracted here in the first place by job opportunities when the City had more blue collar work to offer. Now, they seem to have gravitated toward civil service jobs, such as those within the Postal Service and City government. A large portion of the City's transportation workers (MUNI) are also black. (As in their attempts to integrate the schools, blacks have had to sue the City over alleged discriminatory hiring policies. The NAACP successfully sued the Fire Department in 1971, and in 1973 the NAACP and the local Officers of Justice sued the City's Police Department.)

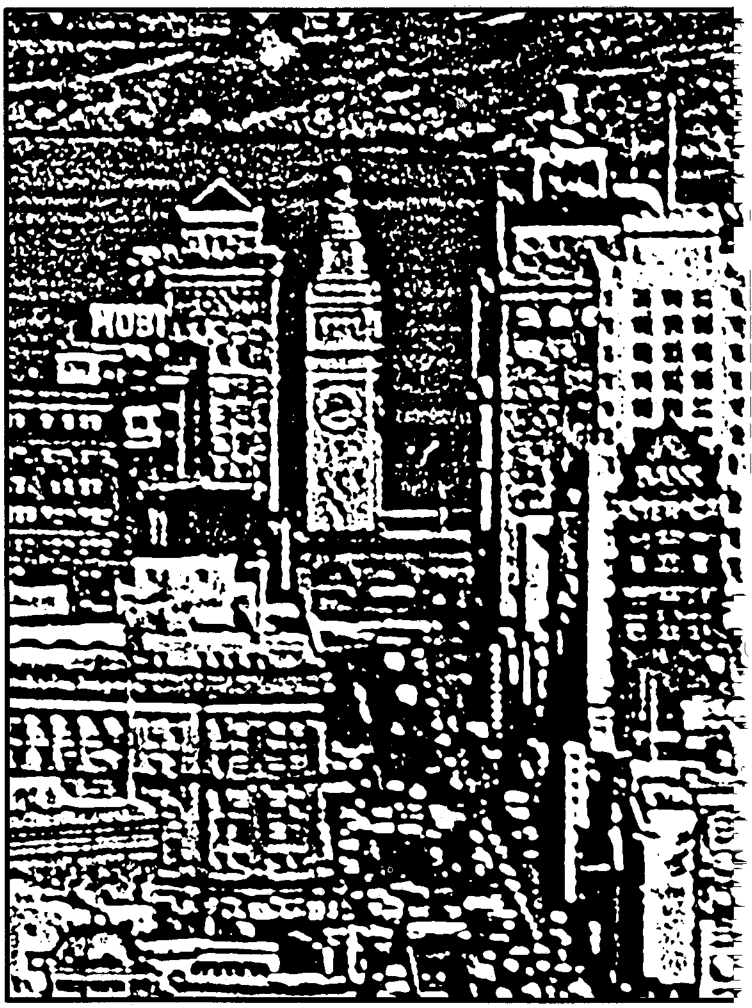
These various ethnic and racial groups, then, along with the still-growing gay community, constitute the largest voting blocs, or special-interest groups, even if they don't always vote *en bloc*.

Of all the groups, gay men are probably the most vocal and most visible. Their votes are courted by virtually every politician in town, since the gays are reputed to have among them some 20 percent of San Francisco's registered voters, and—as individuals—are supposedly one of the wealthiest of the special-interest groups.

While the gays trace their freedom movement back to the 1950s, it is only recently that they have become a force to be reckoned with in city politics. In the mid-1970s, Harvey Milk came out of the closet and into City politics. With overwhelming support from the gay community, in 1977 he became the first openly gay supervisor in San Francisco's history. But while gay men are highly active in San Francisco's cultural and political circles, large numbers of homophobes still lurk about in the fog. One of them, ex-police officer Dan White, unwittingly changed the course of San Francisco politics when, in November of 1978, he assassinated Mayor George Moscone (for having denied him re-appointment to his seat as Supervisor), then walked across City Hall and shot Supervisor Milk. (For a thorough examination of Dan White's brief political career, see the articles by Warren Hinckle in the *San Francisco Review of Books*, January and February 1980).

Dianne Feinstein, at that time president of the Board of Supervisors and a liberal Democrat, was Moscone's immediate successor as Mayor. Heavy pressure was put on her to appoint a gay to succeed the slain Harvey Milk, and she did, in the person of Harry Britt. Britt subsequently ran for re-election and won, even though by then he had some opposition within the gay community. (Britt has on occasion antagonized various segments of the San Francisco community by his actions or statements—for

"a combination of events . . . has contributed to the white-collaring of San Francisco. . . ."



M. Halberstadt

example, he created a furor in the City-that-knows-how by proposing an ordinance which would have given homosexual couples the same rights—pensions, health benefits, etc.—as married couples, but without the blessings of either church or state. Catholic Archbishop John Quinn, in whose Cathedral of St. Mary's Dan White had sought refuge after the City Hall shootings, registered a strong protest with Mayor Feinstein. He was joined by Protestant ministers and leaders of the Jewish religious community in his outspoken opposition to Britt's proposal. After wavering briefly, Feinstein announced that she would oppose such a measure, and so the bill died. The gay community in San Francisco was outraged and demonstrated openly, although not as violently as they had after White was let off with a manslaughter verdict and a light sentence of seven years, eight months. That demonstration, called "Night of Rage," is almost as well-known in gay political history as the famous Stonewall uprising in New York.)

Since the time of Harvey Milk, the "gay seat" on the Board of Supervisors has become a political cliché. The logic of having such a seat may make no sense* (according to the 1980 census, there are some 82,000 Chinese in San Francisco, 86,000 blacks, 32,000 Mexicans, not to mention 12,000 Japanese, while at this writing two black women—but no Orientals or Hispanics—sit on a Board of Supervisors which has 11 seats), but the acceptance of special interest clichés is related to the reasons that Mayor Feinstein now finds herself in such a powerful position. As a member of the Board of Supervisors, Dianne Feinstein usually took what one would call "liberal" or, at the very least, moderate positions. Feinstein is well-to-do, Jewish and well-educated, and though she lived in one of the City's poshest neighborhoods (Pacific Heights), she tended to side with the underdog. However, once elected mayor, she was subject to the same pressures that all elected officials eventually come under—not the least of them financial—and as her first full term in office progressed, she was perceived as middle-of-the-road on some questions, but leaning far to the right on others. (During her administration there has been a veritable building boom downtown; previously imposed height and bulk limits on high-rise buildings have been circumvented in some cases, and various deals have been cut, under which builders have made certain concessions to the City in return for being allowed to exceed established limits.) For the most part, she has tried to please all sides in her efforts to remain popular (as she still is, to a great extent). Even though she vetoed Britt's "live-in lover" proposal, she has supported other gay issues and has appointed gays to city posts. She personally intervened to help head off a threatened hotel workers strike which would have severely damaged the City's tourist industry. Most recently she urged management and workers at the City's two leading newspapers (*Chronicle* and *Examiner*) to come together on terms and avoid a costly strike. She has been all over the place seeking support, and sometimes flexing her muscles. Recently, she came out in favor of building a baseball stadium in downtown San Francisco, something Giants' owner and political contributor Bob Lurie is desperate to do, given the sparse crowds which the Giants draw at wind-blown Candlestick Park, perched out on the edge of the Bay.

Like many politicians, Feinstein tends to react rather than to act first. For example, early in 1983 writer Warren Hinckle put together a series of scathing articles detailing how certain Tenderloin hotels were skimping on essential services, such as heat, to the elderly tenants and the handicapped. The series, in the *Chronicle*, brought a public outcry; TV reporters went digging, and the media had a field day. Caught by surprise, Feinstein ordered a series of inspections and crackdowns on the hotels by several City departments and many of the problems were quickly, if temporarily, brought under control. (As an interesting sidebar, reporter Hinckle was later censured by the National News Council, on the grounds that an entire group of people—most of the hotels in violation were owned by an East Indian family—had been stigmatized by his articles. So much for public service. An ethnic newspaper, *India West*, published across the Bay in El Sobrante, had lodged the protest with the New York-based News Council.)

This summer, an order went out from City Hall to crack down on merchants who had set up stalls on the sidewalks outside their shops, particularly those in Chinatown, where storekeepers have been operating since San Francisco became a city. There was an immediate cry of outrage from the Chinese community, among others; Mayor Feinstein rescinded the order and appointed a committee to study the problem of sidewalk vendors and report to her at some future date. However, she has pushed through a permit for a large building to be constructed in the narrow streets of Chinatown, a move against which there was much vocal opposition. When Philippines dictator Ferdinand Marcos visited San Francisco, she presented him with the key to the City, over the protests of the local Filipino community. But when Benigno Aquiño was assassinated, she issued a statement saying that she would have to reconsider San Francisco's sister-city relationship with Manila.

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*One would think that ideally the Board of Supervisors should serve citywide interests, not only those of special-interest groups, and in this connection the issue of district rather than citywide elections is one that keeps recurring. There is some feeling here that the Mayors and Boards of Supervisors tend to favor what are called "downtown interests," i.e., those groups who benefit most from tax loopholes, and from the so-called "Manhattanization" of San Francisco, the overbuilding of high rises in the downtown area. Such interests would include bankers, realtors and their attorneys, the Chamber of Commerce—groups usually seen as being at odds with the middle- and lower-income neighborhoods—and, of course, the building trades, whose steady employment over the last decades has been due to the almost unabated skyscraper construction in the City's financial and shopping districts.

Those favoring election of Supervisors by district finally prevailed in November of 1977, when voters elected to let them have their way. However, the new law didn't last long, and it was repealed in a special election held in August of 1980. (Dan White was one of the Supervisors launched into office while the new district election law was in force. His district, the Outer Mission, was composed largely of blue collar people, and part of White's success in campaigning there had to do with his thinly veiled promises to do something about the feared takeover of San Francisco by gays.)

The one event that propelled Feinstein into her present power position is also one that has badly damaged, if not downright decimated, a number of special-interest groups.

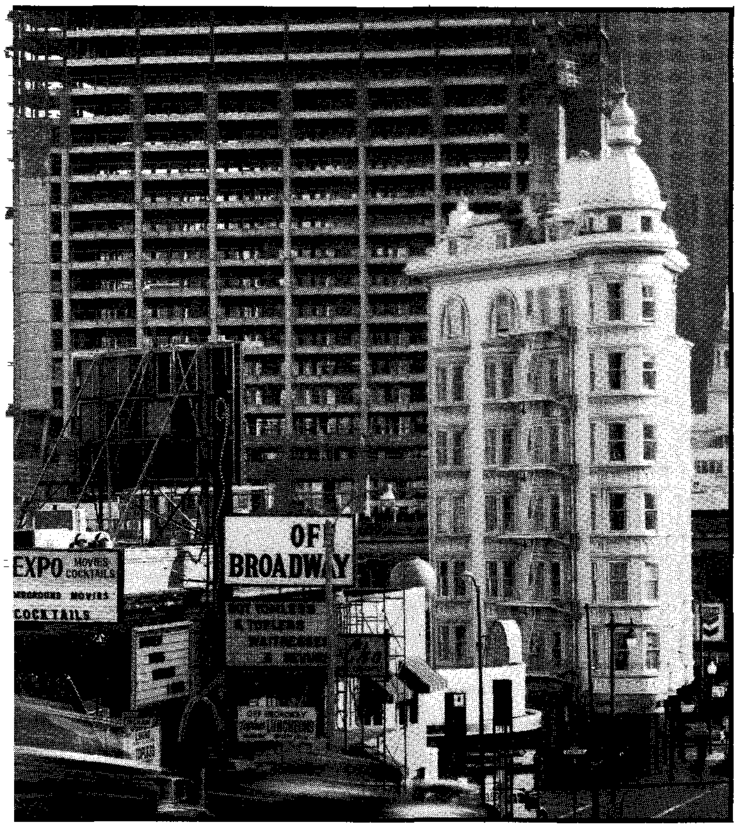
In an attempt to show a liberal spirit and at the same time do something about crime in San Francisco (crime rates, by the way, particularly those of violent crime, have gradually declined over the past two years), Feinstein proposed a handgun-control ordinance for San Francisco, perhaps seeking to emulate the success of a similar ordinance in Morton Grove, Illinois. As was to be expected in the "wide-open" city of San Francisco, cries of foul play were raised, and Feinstein ordered the City Attorney to determine whether or not her proposed ordinance was constitutional.

Among those who challenged Feinstein's handgun proposal was a small group in the Haight-Ashbury known as the White Panthers. The Panthers are a remnant of the '60s, and try to maintain the spirit of those days by arranging free food handouts, petitioning for free public transportation, and advocating other items on the '60s rad-lib agenda. Those not familiar with the White Panthers were astonished when the Panthers challenged Feinstein on the handgun measure, adopting a stance usually assigned in America to conservatives—which the

Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone

"... Feinstein has learned to be shrewd and tough beneath her mild-mannered appearance. . . ."

White Panthers definitely are not. To show how serious they were about the issue, the Panthers put a small army of volunteers in the streets and began circulating a petition to recall the mayor. (In San Francisco, signatures of only ten percent of the registered voters are needed in order for such a petition to be acted upon—although a new proposition is on the ballot for November, increasing the percentage of voter signatures necessary to justify a Recall.*)



Lawrence Sturhahn

The Panthers got slightly more than the required percentage, at which point groups of every political stripe jumped into the fray. The so-called "downtown" groups came out on the side of the mayor, and backed up their words with huge amounts of money. The newspapers published editorials in her support. Meanwhile, every individual and group that had a gripe against Feinstein signed the petition and/or made public statements supporting it. Even the supposedly solid gay community was split on the issue of whether to go for or against the Recall. Some senior citizens came out against the Mayor, claiming she wasn't doing enough for them and pointing out that her crackdown on welfare hotels had come only after Hinckle's articles appeared. An environment/ecology group, California Tomorrow, usually thought of as "liberal," came out against Feinstein, charging that she had allowed too much building to go on downtown. A tenants group urged Recall, saying that Feinstein was more sympathetic to landlords than to renters. The issue, in short, seriously—though temporarily—divided the electorate.

Ironically, while this brouhaha was going on, the State Court of Appeals ruled that Feinstein's gun proposal was in conflict with an already-existing California gun-control law, and therefore invalid. Now the original issue was no longer an issue, but the Recall machinery had already been set in motion, and the City had to follow through.

In June of this year, Feinstein walloped the opposition. The Recall proponents cast fewer ballots than they had had signatures on their petitions back in March and April. The failed Recall attempt represented a major triumph for Feinstein and solidified her position as the City's strongest politician. One by one, those who had once been considered possible mayoral candidates backed out—former Supervisors' President John Molinari; popular Supervisor and former sheriff Richard Hongisto; new Board prexy Wendy Nelder—now there was virtually no opposition to Feinstein's quest for a second term.

The split in the gay community over Feinstein's policies was deeper than ever. The tenants' and environmental groups who supported the Recall were now left vulnerable at City Hall. As for the White Panthers, their leader, Tom Stevens, and one of his cohorts were arrested last summer after a fracas with some passersby. The two were brought to trial, found guilty, and Stevens was given a short prison term. (He had previously served time on a burglary charge, and in 1975 had been involved in a shootout with the San Francisco police.)

Dianne Feinstein has learned to be a shrewd and tough politician beneath her mild-mannered appearance, and there is apprehension in some quarters of the City that she will take sweet revenge on those who voted for her ouster. At the victory party celebrating her triumph, Feinstein shouted "We'll cream 'em!" obviously referring to anyone who would dare oppose her in November. Only a scandal of monumental proportions could possibly have derailed her successful run for a second term. A small fly in the ointment was a lawsuit against the City—naming Feinstein and some Supervisors—by a building developer who charged that the Mayor and other officials had conspired against him to deny his right to convert one of his buildings to condominiums. (To her credit, though some will disagree, Feinstein was instrumental before the Recall in putting a cap—200—on the number of condo conversions that could be effected in one year in San Francisco.) The developer had lobbied hard in the state legislature for a new bill which would bypass the San Francisco ordinance, and admitted donating large sums of money to the legislator who was to carry the bill through the State Assembly.

To further strengthen her popularity, Feinstein successfully lobbied to bring the Democratic Convention to San Francisco in July 1984. There is some talk that should the Democrats retake the White House, Feinstein might be appointed to a high-level federal post, and she has even been mentioned as a possible vice-presidential candidate. At this point, her options are almost unlimited—barring some serious political gaffe. Limited by law to two successive terms in office, Feinstein can already begin looking ahead to her post-mayoral career. □

**The increase in percentage needed for Recall was overwhelmingly approved by the city's voters.*

LONE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE:
A Study in Change

BARBARA McDONALD

The Handbook
San Francisco College for Women
Lone Mountain
1960

—Academic dress consists of the cap and gown worn with heels (black shoes) and white gloves. It is worn for Holy Mass.
—Bandannas should be removed as soon as one arrives at college. They may not be worn to class, to the cafeteria, lounge, or to the Chapel.
—Shorts, slacks and pedal pushers may not be worn on campus. In going to or from bicycle riding, etc. skirts or coats may be worn. One must wear a skirt or a coat over athletic attire.
—Ink may not be carried about the house.
—Chewing gum is forbidden.
—Parents should inform the college of the illnesses of their daughters.
—Resident students may not make nor receive calls after 10:00.
—Resident students may sit on the lawn on the east side but not in front of the building.
—They may eat lunch in the East Garden but never on the front steps, nor on the steps leading down to Turk Street.

We flow off the 38 bus from all parts of the city, pleated skirts, crew neck sweaters, 104 steps to the top, a quick hand of bridge in the lounge, and off to four years of philosophy, theology, two years of world history, literature. Mother Keeler collects stamps for pagan babies between the second and third acts of *Richard III*. Mother Bourret extracts scraps of paper, pieces of kleenex filled with jottings, from her copious pockets, and miraculously creates a living period of history. Mother Knapp, jill of all trades: registrar, head of grad committee, professor of German, Philosophy, honors program seminars, sleeps on a fold-up cot in her office. Mother Callaghan holds court on a high bench across from the library, an ancient Dresden doll in black and white versed in Spenser, Eliot, and Kerouac.

University of San Francisco Photo

The little sisters scrub floors, wax furniture, and smile accented sunshine. Mother-daughter teas with silver service, white gloves, bone china cups balanced over polite conversation. Fathers escort us to dinner. May I have this dance. The ski trip at Squaw Valley and we meet JFK on the campaign trail. Rose Kennedy tells us how to be presented at St. James Court, down to the last ostrich feather. You never know. Tapestry-lined walls, antique furniture, formal parlors, Mater's statue on the third floor. President's Day and the annual Morality play with appropriate gifts in the theatre, meanwhile climbing out the locker room window to the East Garden in cap and gown (my hem is caught on the handle, will you get it?) to sneak down the hill to Mel's for lunch. Lockers crammed with the *Summa*, Aristotle, Euclid, Gardner's *Art through the Ages*, an archery glove. President Mother Parks changes the sprinklers at Underhill and recalls days of glory on the school hockey team.

The doll's head nailed to a tree on the path to Underhill amidst chips of gravestones. Eerie in the fog. Mixers at U.S.F. in the Green and Gold room. Irish Club parties and doing sets at the KRB. Dinner in the cafeteria where nylons, heels, and dinner dresses are required. The student lounge smokefilled with tricks of hearts and spades.

"Rose Kennedy tells us how to be presented at St. James Court, down to the last ostrich feather. . . ."

The Winter Formal and Flower Ball. Waltzing to the music of Ernie Heckscher in taffeta and tulle. The Queen's Jewels come to the city to be housed at S.F.C.W. We are on the evening news.

Reverend Mother Mejia passes through the halls from her place somewhere above, does she live in the Tower? and the Convent of the Sacred Heart girls curtsey. The cloister. The lily procession in December. The Subject B. Exotic boarders from faraway places. Receptions on the east lawn. Teas in the library. Heated seminars in 101 with Dr. McArthur pronouncing the evils of banks and ZsaZsa Gabor.

1975

"So You're Single Again" teaching a course on divorce. Sister Jeannette Kimball carries tuna fish sandwiches in her bag for the down 'n outers at the Greyhound Bus Depot. The ivory tower has opened its windows and doors to the neighborhood thanks to Pope John and Vatican II. But sisters still need rides. Sure, I'll be glad to drive you. Men are in the halls and in the classes and in the dorms. No more College for Women, now Lone Mountain. Required dress is clothes. Russian maids from Shanghai polish and wax the gleaming hardwood floors each day on hands and knees. Jan the green-suited man from Poland still drives the truck and makes keys for any sister that stops him in the hall. The building is doubled: 7 stories of dorms, a chapel with grand organ, theatre and ballroom for the Music, Dance, and Drama departments; a new library that leaks, the concrete is sandier, and the elevator won't hold a coffin. Picnics on the front lawn, classes on the steps, on the street, in south of Mission warehouses, Sister disrupts Del Monte Corp. meeting waving a can of tuna.

Director of Institutional Services, I oversee bats in the belfry, mice in the boiler room. Gone are the five gardeners, now $600 is budgeted for grounds. Not enough money, not enough rooms as departments expand. The grad school is big. And through the halls 24 hours day and night the people wander: black, white, brown, yellow, male, female, gay, dancing, singing, acting, sometimes screaming. The faculty floats from building to building, unhappy and fighting. Credibility gaps. Is the administration telling the truth? Plots and subplots. Only academics can devise such devices. Sudden posters proclaim the provost is resigning. The typewriter is traced. The tapestries disappear. A Russian detective plays Columbo. And silently the nuns disappear.

Faculty expands. The administration is mixed. Academic requirements: new options. No four year requirements, instead individual study. Grad School: Humanistic Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Community Development, Creative Arts Therapy, Museum Studies, the needs of the block and the community. The windows the doors open to the world. The garbage man is a garbage mouth/zen mind/drama student who once sold Brooks Brothers suits, the gardener is a poet. Carpenters take classes and dance. Editors carry guns.

The president gives a convocation. The students are angry. Has freedom gone awry? Students freak out, are con men, are 1975, the man on the street. 16 VW bugs disappear from the lower parking lot. Poetry parties in the library. Events in the Wabe. Lawrence Ferlinghetti reads while Imogene Cunningham listens in the audience. The Big Game: Arts vs. Staff on the field at Underhill. Half soccer/half football with full keggers.

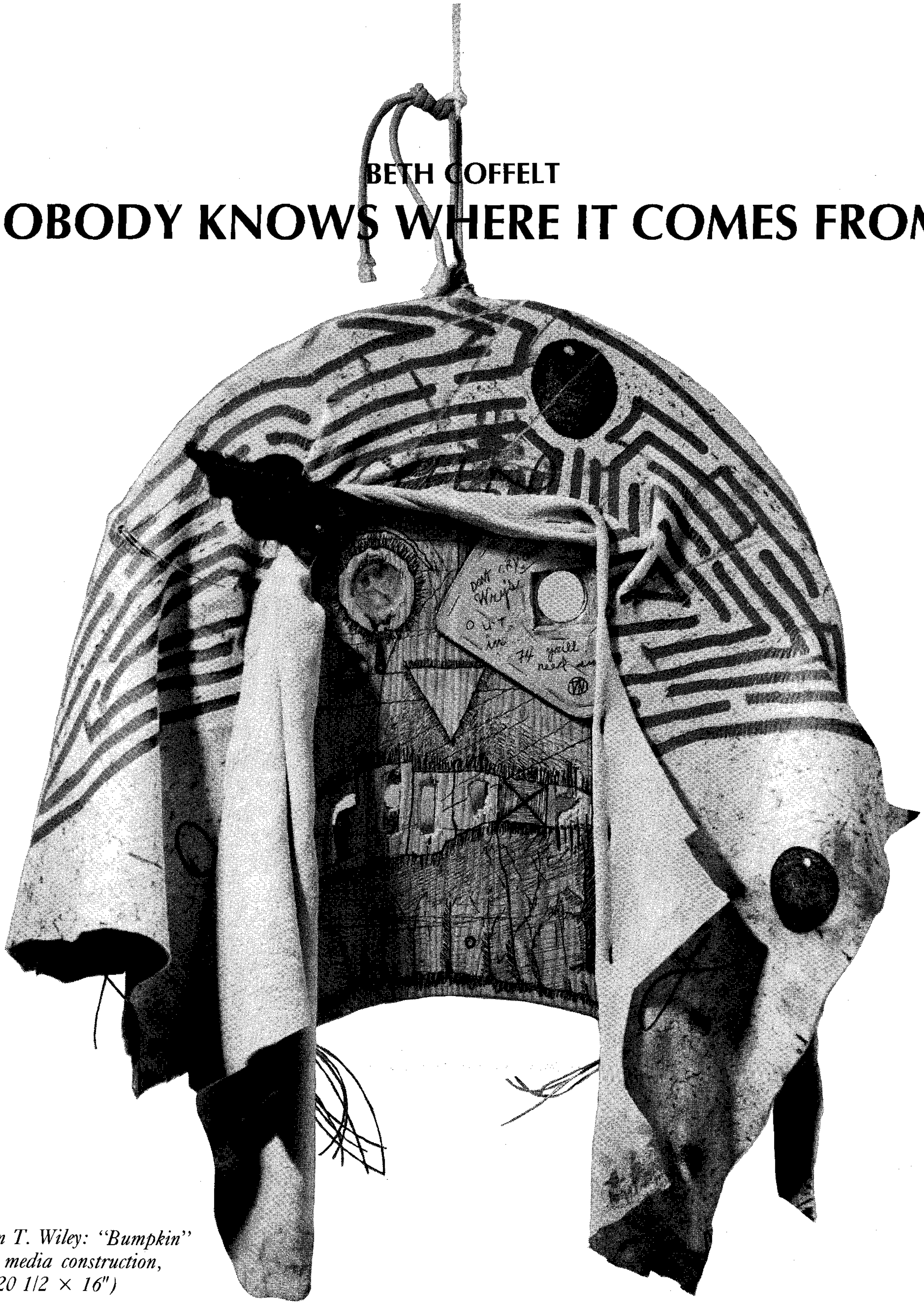
Alumni protest. Change is unsettling. The Symphony plays; David Broder, Studs Terkel speak in the Theatre. It is the bicentennial. Hurray for the red, white and blue. Not enough money. But we got a grant and another grant. It's restricted funds. Too many classes, not enough students. Cutbacks are necessary. Bye bye love. Hello union. New Big Game: Faculty vs. Administration. What's in the contract? Negotiation. Sister Patch retires. A man president. And a Jew! Alumni come back. A chair of religious studies. Inflation increases. Expenses get higher. PG&E hits the moon. The natives are restless. A million dollars doesn't do the trick. There are no nuns, not enough students, not enough money.

1978

The college is dead. □

BETH COFFELT

NOBODY KNOWS WHERE IT COMES FROM



William T. Wiley: "Bumpkin" (mixed media construction, 1973; 20 1/2 × 16")

In 1967, at the treacherous liminal age of thirty, San Francisco Bay artist William T. Wiley left the Davis (Aggie) campus of the University of California where he had taught since 1962, went to England on sabbatical leave, and a short time later underwent a metamorphosis that must have shocked to the core the museum curators, art dealers, and collectors who had already banked heavily on his style—then a stylish, volatile mixture of current favorites: abstract expressionism, Funk, Pop comic book figures who shouted "ooga" or "phooey"; a blurred, Baconesque impressionism, and surreal de Chirico-like nightmares of chilly geometric forms chained to each other, bleeding or dreaming. To his admirers who saw in Wiley the talent and authority to take art that requisite one step beyond, it must have seemed both mutinous and disastrous. Abandoning all the deep-diving gear forced on him by career pressure, ignoring the demand for large-scale, nihilistic, outrageous "statements," and discarding all preconceptions about what art was or ought to be, Wiley walked off into a profound transformation as if he had just stepped off the Embarcadero into the Sausalito Ferry.

For the artists he left behind the betrayal must have hurt hidjus.[1] Wiley was an acknowledged wizard of Funk (and probably its Lord High Executioner, as well) along with ceramic sculptor Robert Arneson, also a fellow teacher at Davis. With Wiley defecting and Arneson out of the game (Arneson, too, had begun to transform), Funk art went into a decline, and was dead by 1970. The Bull market promised by Peter Selz' historic *Funk* show at U.C. Berkeley in 1967 fizzled; no major new works were made after (ca.) 1970, although the early Funk pieces were revered by the new generation coming up as if they were sacred icons, First Causes. Joan Brown's chewed-up rat, Arneson's shit-strewn toilets, fingers and lurid genitalia invading telephones and typewriters, Wiley's *Slant Step* (he found an old linoleum-covered box in a junk store and with it launched one of the most influential movements in contemporary sculpture) were hideous and outrageous but they glistened with amniotic fluid. Young artists now make outrageous art but for the wrong reasons; dimly insolent, like waltzing to the Star Spangled Banner, it advances careers decimal point by decimal but otherwise does not itself move. The Funk artists made it for a number of complex and irretrievable reasons, none of which were along the lines of career expectation, and it radiated with shrieks.

But if Wiley was a leader of Funk he was, as Max Beerbohm used to say of himself, so essentially a guest; he's a loner and always has been, his loyalty to the other members of the Richland Gang (Robert Hudson and William Allan) notwithstanding. Laconic, droll, and restless, he is *Western*. Hilton Kramer, in a New York *Times* piece on Wiley, called his work "Dude Ranch Dada." He's as Western as Jasper Johns is Eastern. He is many other things—he's also a constructivist sorcerer—but the east-west strabismus so far has prevented the major critical establishment from placing him in focus *as an artist.* He may not yet be what he eventually will be; it could be that he is, in one life span, recapitulating the whole history of form-making. But for sure, he is mysterious, connected to *something else* over which logic has no power. If anyone had told Wiley at the critical larval stage in which he suddenly found himself in 1967 that he would stand as a hero, a real-time Odysseus, or that he was one of those prefiguring a drastic change in human consciousness—one that would liberate its form-making impulse—he might have been unnerved and given up art altogether, which he in fact considered. The fact that he didn't has given us a rare sight of the San Francisco spirit in full form, as if it had materialized like a *genius loci* out of the woods back of Wiley's studio in Marin County (where he in fact gets a lot of materials for his work) and from the hazy swamp of "superiorly unscientific"[2] business spawned here in the 'sixties and 'seventies. But finding himself in this strange country of the spirit he did the only thing he could and remain an artist: he painted it.

"Actually, it happened in New Jersey," Wiley told me a while back.

"I went to England, yes, and Europe—all that different environment—but it wasn't until I got back into this country when I was in New York and New Jersey that fall that I began to see something new.

"I made a watercolor called 'Dirty Echoes on the Ganges.' It was a painting of a piece called 'Red Easel Preserved in Wax.' " (Wiley often makes elaborate constructions out of tree stumps, leather hides, old tools, or whatever else is handy—one work listed contents including feathers, animal skins, English walnuts, bones and beans. The Stedelijk Museum in Holland once cabled him that Capricorn beetles inside a tree-stump piece were trying to eat their way out and were creating a mounting pile of sawdust. Although it created a kinetic metaphor he rather enjoyed, he finally told them to fumigate it. Once at the Whitney Museum in New York Wiley was exhibiting a piece called "Outrageous Extension," made from a very long piece of bamboo, nine or ten feet. It was attached to a forked branch with pieces of rubber that created a tension that arched them into bows. One of the branches broke. "Well, you couldn't very well have an 'outrageous extension' without the extension," Wanda Hansen, Wiley's long-time dealer and agent, told me. "The Whitney put in an insurance claim but the company wrote back to say they wouldn't pay because there was 'inherent vice' in the material. That just sounded to Bill and the rest of us like a Wiley title, so we framed up the letter and now we show it along with the piece.")

"There was some writing at the bottom of the watercolor ('Dirty Echoes')," Wiley continued. "Stuff that was going through my head currently. It was the first time I just let it go from mind to paper—no attempt to criticize it, direct it or control it, just surrendered to the urge to do it." (Wiley had found that words, left to themselves, can be as kinetic as Capricorn beetles.)

"I had no association with watercolors except for a prejudice about it being a Sunday painter's medium. But for some reason I took a set of watercolors along with me when I went to England. I also had seen some watercolor collages of Jim Dine's—children's book illustration type things, ripped up and pasted together. And I kept thinking about Dylan Thomas, in *Child's Christmas in Wales*, when he got a coloring book and he realized he could paint in the sky green, or the trees yellow, or do anything he wanted."

In a series of small, enigmatic watercolors which do look, at first glance, like pictures from the *Blue Fairy Book*, Wiley created imaginary landscapes with bridges, rivers, shacks; the debris of a forest floor, or studio interior, or back yard or garden house; images of search, hesitancy, curiosity, doubt, horizon-scanning, watching, waiting; of imagining what it would be like to *cross over.* There were no people anywhere in these pictures, but the emotion they produced was stunning—a kind of compressed nostalgia with a surreal *déjà vu* jolt.

Lame and Blind in Eden (1969) pictured a back yard at the edge of a copse of straight-trunked, nearly leafless trees like Wands of Tarot cards. They had dropped their long, limp leaves over the hard-packed ground, which might also have been an adobe floor; over the slumped seat of a canvas camp stool; along the gritty rim of a concrete foundation for something begun but never finished. An old axe, pitted and forgotten, lay on its side on the same rim. A log with staves supporting it and smaller hewn branches nearby—something else begun and abandoned. Between the camp stool and the log, a surveyor's telescope focussed on infinity. Along the line of its sight a round hole cut in a big, square piece of wood—the size of a painting—and beyond it an obscure stretch of blue water choked with reeds; beyond that a green bank, a hill, and distant, violet mountains, and beyond that. . . . What does it add up to? Memory? It's a poor sort of memory that works only backwards, as the Red Queen remarked.

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[1] Kipling, Rudyard, *How The Elephant Got Its Trunk*

[2] Graves, Robert, *The White Goddess*

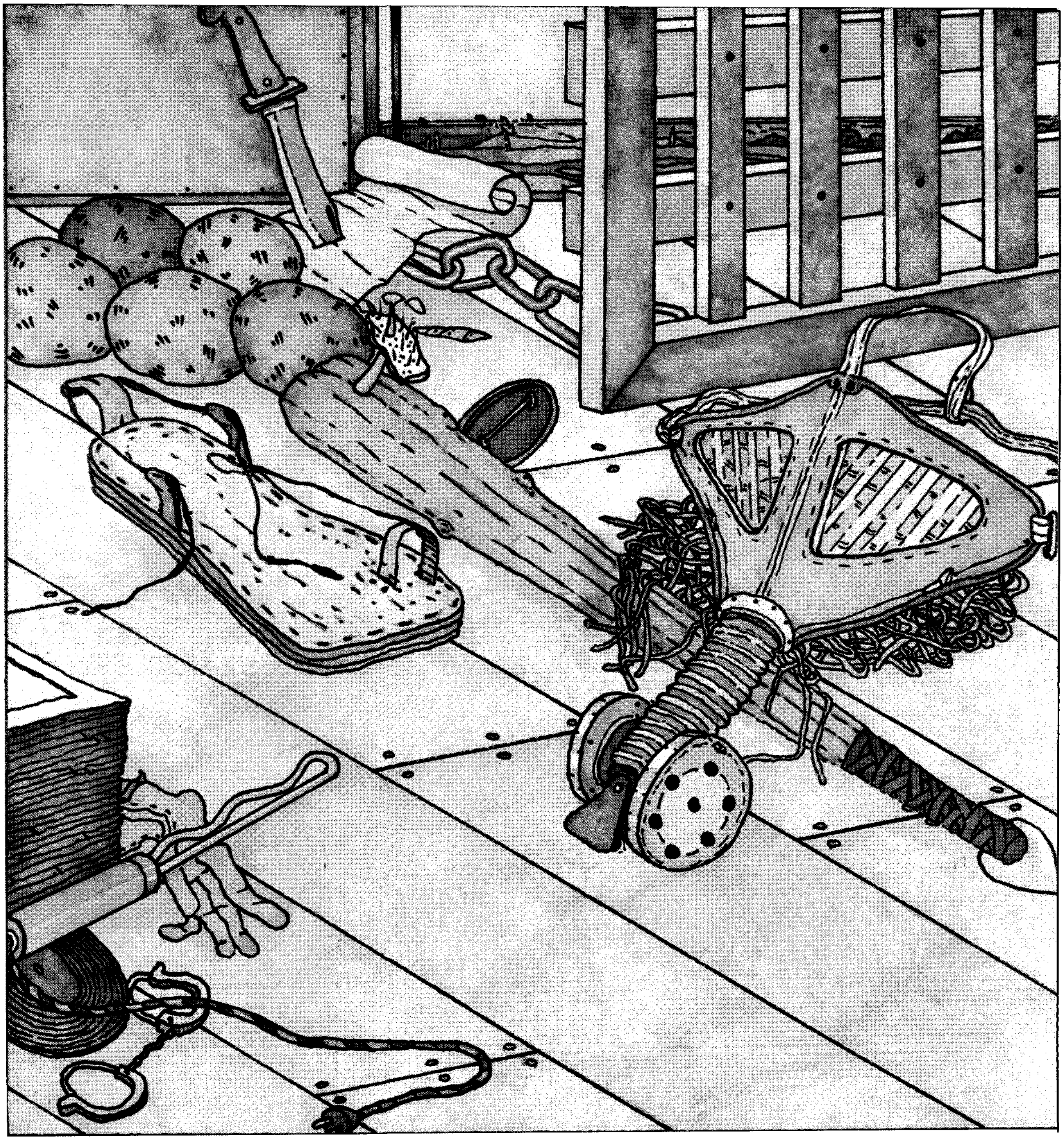
After a year or two of almost somnambulant wandering in this newly-discovered void, Wiley assembled in one major work, *Ship's Log* (1969), the elements of an apparent journey. It was another compound work that included a large, open construction made to resemble the rigging of a boat; a triangular canvas sail; an openwork stanchion supporting it; several small watercolors of little sailboats, the kinds children make; and a low, slanted wooden stand, covered with glass, that held an open book in Wiley's handwriting. It begins:

"August 31, 1969. Voyage from Mind to Mind. I wonder at the time of early explorations into the physical world if there weren't already those who felt misplaced in time. Maybe around Columbus' time. I wonder if for some there was already too much technology available to make that kind of exploring interesting. . . ."

For the next ten years that journey went on, and to many it seemed that Wiley was exploring the region Aldous Huxley had in mind when he described the *Antipodes*—down-under, aboriginal, mythical places at opposite ends of the earth, where we had never been but seemed to recognize. In the beginning no one knew what to make of it; now it is clearly evident that he had set sail on a personal, allegorical journey, an immense one, and every single work from that beginning was a record of what he found along the way. *Ship's Log* was the first major image of what would become Wiley's characteristic style, a gentle, wondering, elliptical swing through the wilderness of the human soul with its contrariness, its immutable darknesses, and its delicate beauty. That much of it at first seemed put in a code to which no one held the cipher caused confusion among critics. "You don't make art out of a twig and a piece of leather," S.F. *Chronicle* critic Alfred Frankenstein once complained. "If I agree that art is in the relationship, I don't see the relationship." Puns made Frankenstein wince, and many of Wiley's works were riddled with them—they were, in fact, three-dimensional conundrums (riddles whose answers are puns). Now (*post hoc, ergo propter hoc*) the successes of Wiley's constructions—kinetic in time as well as space, like exploded cubism motored by relativity—make it clear that the key to these funny, elegant, homespun/sophisticated works fits nowhere else but Wiley's already

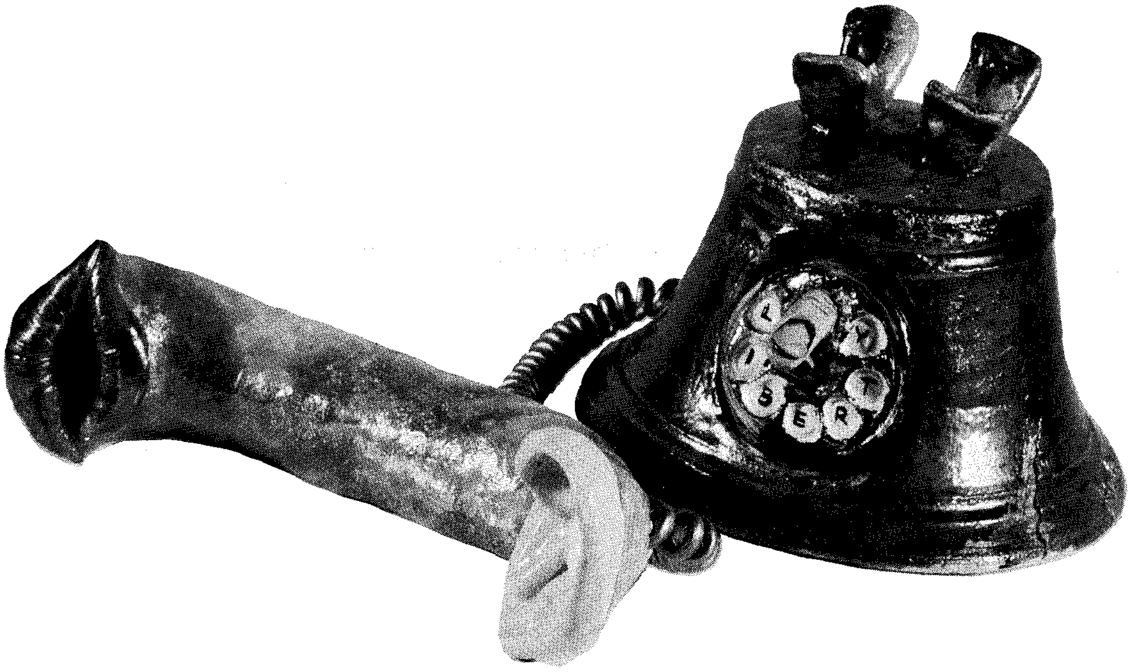
Robert Hudson: "Skeptical Space" (polychrome steel, 1967; 46 × 30 × 30"

"the Bay Area art world . . . is a book whose index is greater than its text . . . ."



William T. Wiley: "Summertime" (water color, 1968)

Robert Arneson: "Liberty Calls"
(1965)



open door, through which he had strolled so casually that day in 1967, beckoning for us to follow.

("It was freedom from any past history of working. Not what I thought I should, what I'd been taught to think. I guess I was in a mood to open up all sources. Always before if I felt any influence I tried to hide it—I was afraid of plagiarizing. Then I realized that nobody owns it and nobody knows where it comes from. If it weren't needed, if it weren't worthy, if it had no relevance, it would somehow be destroyed, or disappear, or be discarded.

"It came from trusting the image.")

Years later now, the Bay Area art world has come to resemble a book whose index is greater than its text; referrals back to those First Causes are legion. Last year I drove up to the Davis campus (Wiley left teaching in the 1970s) and passed a hallway exhibit of art class products, and every one of them looked like a little fledgling Wiley. I was charmed by them but sad, like Wilbur the Pig in E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web*, who had been saved from spring butchering by the miraculous words ("radiant pig") that kept appearing over his sty in the webs of Charlotte the spider. When Charlotte died after one last heroic effort she left behind her a hatching egg sack, from which hundreds of little Charlottes clambered. Wilbur said he loved them, in a way, but that no one could ever take Charlotte's place in his heart. "It isn't often," he said, "you have a good friend who's a good writer too."

Over the years Wiley has included these verbal messages ("rim a niss thass all we can do") in almost all of his work, a deep tenderness toward the human race disguised as schoolboy graffiti or deliberately misspelled double entendre. Most have been directed toward violence, in ourselves or in others; they patiently remind us to remember our lost humanity as the first step in forgetting the reckless brutality we seem to crave. We were a whole generation who had to learn to take our nourishment from the air, like plants which must fix nitrogen from the wind. Wiley was pointing to our role, our place in life, even if that be only as the rootless spore-bearers we were.

Well, "God only knows what we were expecting," says a voyager in a Wiley watercolor. Those years of San Francisco in the 'sixties are gone, more in sorrow than in anger; even the 'seventies, when it all went down the drain with a great splash, are gone. We are left with the 'eighties, like a ring in a bathtub.

And gentle Wiley is gone, too. He has made another departure, this time both in scale and materials. His new work, cast in steel at Lippincott Foundry in Connecticut, is magnificent and formidable; *Nomad Is An Island*, a large, complex piece of sculpture, whose chief feature is a real-scale oil drum leaking red ooze, is a protest against the dumping of leaking drums of nuclear wastes jettisoned near the Farrallon Islands offshore from San Francisco Bay. Like other artists of his generation—Arneson, Kienholz, Segal—who feel that the danger from (nuclear) recklessness has displaced all other concerns for artists or anyone else, much of his new work is explicit warning, a call for emergency measures.

With *Nomad* Wiley has returned to his point of departure, as, in fact, have we all; perilously close to where we began. Naked, adrift on a small vessel, shoulder-to-shoulder with our brothers the beasts, and wondering. ☐

GOING EVERYONE'S WAY

The Catholic Church in San Francisco

DAVID ALVAREZ

Sunday. The church of SS. Peter and Paul. A ribbon of verse by Dante spans the facade. Twin spires overshadow the Napoli Market, the Fior d'Italia restaurant, and the Cafe Portofino. Inside the church devotional candles flicker before images of San Domenico, San Rocco, and the Madonna delle Grazie. Along the aisles, confessionals bear the names of attending priests: Armand Oliveri, Mario Rosso, Joseph Scanagatta. The church bulletin publishes the marriage banns for Anthony Bologna and Loretta Armenta and announces that the day's masses will be offerred for the intentions of Vittorio Vattuone and Vito Curreri. Ten o'clock mass is in Cantonese.

A Chinese liturgy seems incongruous at San Francisco's "Italian cathedral," which for nearly a century has been the symbol of both religious and cultural life in North Beach, the city's "Little Italy." The apparent incongruity, however, reveals how much North Beach and the Catholic Church in San Francisco have changed in recent years.

For the church, change began with the Second Vatican Council. It has become fashionable to denigrate the achievements of the Council, to speak of naive hopes and lost chances, but for the archdiocese of San Francisco, Vatican II was a watershed. It is impossible to discuss church affairs with any informed Catholic—chancery official, lay activist, parish priest—without hearing repeatedly the words "Since the Council. . . ." Today, almost twenty years after its final session, the Second Vatican Council remains a vital force in the life of the local church.

Before the Council, San Francisco Catholicism seemed a model for the "Bing Crosby church," the church of *Going My Way* and *The Bells of St. Mary's*, of novenas and meatless Fridays, of bingo and altar societies, of paternal priests with hats and pipes and kindly nuns in robes and veils. That church is gone. In its place San Francisco has a different, some say a better, church. A product of Vatican II, this church shares with Catholic churches throughout the world in such reforms as a vernacular liturgy, simplified rites, lay participation in ritual and governance, and modernization of the rules for priests and religious. The similarities, however, do not obscure the fact that the San Francisco church differs not only from the traditional pre-Council church but also from the contemporary church in other parts of America and the world. The difference lies in the issues that preoccupy the church in San Francisco.

The problems confronting a typical archdiocese seem readily apparent: declining religious vocations, increasing expenses, insufficient revenues, under-financed parochial schools. The list is predictable and, in the case of San Francisco, inaccurate. Such problems certainly torment the San Francisco archdiocese, but they do not dominate the conversations of informed Catholics as do three new issues: immigrants, gays, and social justice.

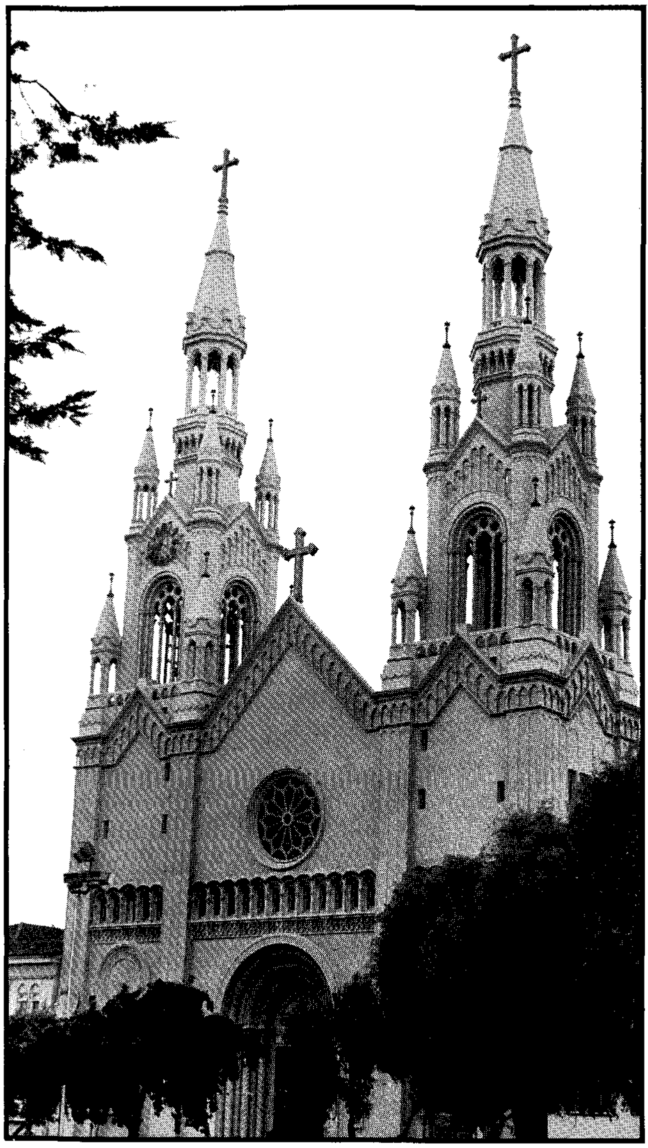
Historically, the Catholic Church in San Francisco, as throughout America, has been an immigrant church and interested pilgrims can still visit such national churches as SS. Peter and Paul (Italian) and Notre Dame des Victoires (French). These churches are reminders of earlier patterns of European immigration. Within the last twenty years, however, a new pattern has developed with an unprecedented influx of Asians and Latin Americans. There are, as there always have been, the Chinese and the Mexicans, but they are now joined by Koreans, Filipinos, Thais, Vietnamese, Chileans, Salvadorans, Peruvians, and Nicaraguans. Most arrive in search of economic opportunity, some in search of political refuge, but whatever their ambitions they are changing the local church.

The impact of the new immigration is most apparent in the parishes. Many parishes have changed significantly in their ethnic composition and priests and nuns are hard-pressed to adapt to new religious and cultural attitudes. Religious roles and structures are challenged, for instance, as the parish fills with non-Christian Asians. As one nun put it, "What happens to your parochial school when more and more of the students are Buddhist?"

Even when the new arrivals are Catholic there are strains. One particular parish in a neighborhood of white, middle-class families had developed, under the influence of Vatican II, a strong "conciliar" attitude toward liturgical innovation and lay involvement in parish governance. Recently that parish has become an area of Filipino settlement and the newcomers have brought a more conservative approach to parish life. They prefer the traditional devotions and expect clerical leadership in parish affairs. They have even brought a different attitude toward church collections, preferring to contribute large sums on special religious occasions such as weddings and baptisms rather than small but regular amounts each Sunday.

To help priests and nuns understand the customs and expectations of the new immigrants and to involve the immigrants in the religious community, the archdiocese

“ ‘What happens to your parochial school when more and more of the students are Buddhist?’ ”



Yvonne F. Alexander

The church of SS. Peter and Paul

established in 1978 a Secretariat for Cultural and Ethnic Affairs. Through workshops and discussions the secretariat tries to develop new liturgical and pastoral styles (such as a Cantonese mass) appropriate to particular national minorities. The archdiocese also maintains a system of “vicars” to supervise the spiritual welfare of the various minorities. Selected where possible from the group they supervise, these priests are another attempt to integrate the immigrants into the church.

While the archdiocese responds to immigrants with vicars and special secretariats, it must also deal with a group which feels increasingly alienated from the church. Gays have always been a part, albeit a silent and unacknowledged part, of the Catholic Church. In recent years, however, gay Catholics in San Francisco have begun to call publicly for greater recognition and consideration. In particular, they want the church to acknowlege that gay relationships are as proper and sacred as heterosexual relationships.

This new assertiveness clearly represents the appearance in local Catholicism of that consciousness and solidarity which has already made the large gay community in San Francisco an important cultural, economic, and political force. The archdiocese has responded by adjusting the old attitudes of moral condemnation and pastoral neglect. In 1980 Archbishop John Quinn issued a pastoral letter which stated unequivocally that “there is no place for discrimination and prejudice against a person because of sexual attraction,” and which reminded Catholics that gays have the same right to human respect and pastoral care as heterosexuals. This message was reiterated in a pamphlet, “Ministry and Homosexuality in the Archdiocese of San Francisco,” which the chancery published to guide priests and nuns in their work with gays. The archbishop also allowed an ecumenical service for gays at St. Mary’s Cathedral, and every Sunday priests distribute communion at meetings of “Dignity,” an organization of gay Catholics.

In its effort to acknowledge gays and welcome them into the religious community the archdiocese is ultimately constrained by the moral teaching of the Catholic Church which forbids homosexual activity. Such activity, even in a stable relationship, is a sin to be confessed and absolved before communion. On this fundamental point there can be no accommodation. While calling for greater understanding and goodwill toward gays, Archbishop Quinn still insisted that homosexual behavior is morally unacceptable. The church will be compassionate and forgiving but it will not compromise its teachings to satisfy one group.

In the “gay issue” the San Francisco church confronts a controversial problem. It will need the practice because another issue, social justice, promises to generate controversy aplenty.

Nothing better reveals the new currents running through the local church than the work of the archdiocesan Commission on Social Justice. Traditionally, and still today in many dioceses, Catholic social justice means charitable assistance to the poor and homeless. In San Francisco, however, the Commission on Social Justice sees its task as nothing less than “participation in the transformation of the world.” This is a view that necessarily transcends soup kitchens and human shelters.

Through the work of a professional staff, special task forces, and a regular newsletter, the commission seeks "To educate Catholics . . . and others on social justice issues in the light of Catholic social teaching," and "To advocate Catholic social principles in areas of public policy and conflict affecting the poor and the powerless." In practice this means that the commission adopts and promotes liberal positions on such issues as national budget priorities, human rights, full employment, prison reform, and draft registration. Under the auspices of the Task Force on Nuclear Energy, "action/reflection" groups have been formed in twenty-two parishes to focus attention on nuclear weapons policy. Soon the commission expects to join with local labor groups to combat the dislocations resulting from plant closings.

The commission's approach departs significantly from traditional practice in San Francisco and elsewhere in its focus on the systemic rather than individual, the national and international rather than the local nature of social justice, and in its preference for direct political action. More importantly, through its social conscience and political activism the commission is articulating a new vision of what it means to be a Catholic in the modern world.

That vision assumes form in the man who leads the city's Catholics. Since his installation as archbishop in 1977, John Quinn has set a new tone for the archdiocese. Unlike his predecessors, Archbishop Quinn has little interest in administration and he prefers to be a pastoral leader. To free himself from his desk he reorganized the administrative structure of the archdiocese so as to decentralize responsibilities. Now, weekends and evenings often find him in the parishes visiting priests and dining with nuns—listening, questioning, and encouraging. For Quinn the parish, not the chancery, is the center of Catholic life since it is there that the church, if it is to do its work, must reach the people.

Archbishop Quinn has also brought to San Francisco a belief that the Catholic Church must be a visible presence in society; a belief that it must make a difference in the lives of people. The archbishop has not hesitated to assert that presence even in the face of controversy. He has criticized American policy in El Salvador and condemned the right-wing terror that killed his friend Archbishop Oscar Romero. In the city that calls itself the "gay capital" of America he firmly reiterated the church's teaching against homosexual activity. Two years before the collective letter of the American bishops on nuclear war he declared any nuclear war to be unjust, endorsed a nuclear freeze, and urged Catholic physicians to oppose the government's medical planning for nuclear war.

This is a new voice, a voice that would not have been heard two decades ago. In the years since Vatican II the Catholic Church in San Francisco has changed, and its archbishop, its approaches to gays and immigrants, its increasing commitment to social action, all illustrate that change. The old church—comfortable, complacent, insular—has given way to a new church. This new church believes that it must live and work in the world, and it is reaching out to that world with confidence and energy. ☐

THEATRE:

ROBERT HURWITT

Change in San Francisco

My first year in the San Francisco Bay Area I spent more time in the theatre on a ten-day Christmas trip to New York than during the remaining twelve months. That was almost twenty years ago. Broadway still seemed viable, if only because the sheer number of productions increased the chances that some plays would prove worthwhile, and the first blush of adventure had not yet worn off Off-Broadway. San Francisco was a virtual thespic wasteland: Herbert Blau and Jules Irving had already departed for the eastern metropolis and Lincoln Center, and the feeble attempts to keep the Actors Workshop alive already seemed doomed to failure. The San Francisco Mime Troupe, under the outrageous guiding hand of R.G. Davis, was a lively but solitary oasis—and one almost totally ignored by the "cultured" classes who continued to slake their thirst on the stale waters of New York road shows.

Last year I saw over two hundred productions in the Bay Area. I've changed, to be sure. Not only am I considerably older but my complementary occupations as theatre critic and editor of a new plays journal require that I spend a good deal of my time at the theatre. But even in the highly improbable case that my passion for theatre had been so great twenty years ago that I would have wanted to spend that much time at the theatre, I would not have been able to find that many productions within several hundred miles of San Francisco. In the '80s, even if I went to the theatre every night of the week and twice on Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, I still wouldn't be able to see every show that opens during the course of the year.

Somehow, during the past two decades, San Francisco has become one of the most productive, and one of the most creative, theatre centers in the entire country.

Exactly how or why this has happened is difficult if not impossible to say. Certainly the demise of the Actors Workshop had left a vacuum which was not allowed to remain long to be abhorred. By the end of the '60s Bill Ball's American Conservatory Theatre had moved in to fill the gap with an even larger, if ultimately less adventurous, repertory company—and a second, smaller, repertory group had established a home in a converted grocery store across the bay in Berkeley. More socially conscious, mostly contemporary fare was available at the gutsy Julian Theatre and a small group in Berkeley had formed the Magic Theatre to explore various aspects of the avant-garde. By the mid-1970s, almost as if without warning, San Francisco was experiencing a theatrical greenhouse effect. New companies were springing up with the profusion of weeds and wildflowers after a very wet winter and the variety was truly impressive to behold: traditional repertory companies, alternative groups dedicated to important contemporary work or to developing new plays, radical collectives, black, Latino, gay, and women's theatres, experimental groups that made the Magic's avant-garde works look stodgy by comparison, cabaret style revues, dance theatre, and even a home-grown one ring circus.

Then as now, the quality varied greatly from group to group and within the groups themselves. Inconsistency and change are two of the

Michael Bry

few constants in the world of theatre, inherent in a form that strives to hold the mirror up to nature. Those groups one can count on for consistency are generally consistently bad, embarrassingly amateurish and seemingly unconscious of their ineptitude. Others seem to go on for years straddling that invisible line between competence and incompetence until they either fall off on the one side or begin the steep climb to proficiency on the other. Even the best groups nod at times, but the flashes of brilliance and occasional full-scale explosions of excellence more than make up for their lapses.

In fact, the lapses are as much a part of the process as the successes, for the two are but different faces of the same coin. Where risks are not taken, there may be said to be no art. The creative act, when it has found its groove and produces works of consistent quality, loses something by that very consistency—becomes the practice of a craft rather than the scarier adventure of art. This is the pitfall in which, all too often, an established company such as ACT gets trapped, whether from a sense of self-complacency or from fear that doing new and different things will imperil its solid subscription base. It can affect smaller companies as well. Even the San Francisco Mime Troupe, now the oldest professional company in the area and still almost synonymous with all things anti-establishment, runs the danger of falling into a comfortable rut—as it did in the middle '70s when its plays seemed written to formula, before the spectre of Reaganism and the discovery of a rich vein of new theatrical images in comic books revitalized its energies.

All of this drives editors and writers up the wall at times. Editors, bless their hearts, want to know in advance what each season will offer, how much space a given piece will require. Critics, faced with the impossibility of seeing everything, can be frequently found half way up that wall trying to decide which show to get to first and which not to see at all. Theatre managers and artistic directors view with continual dismay the implacably steady talent drain of actors, directors, and designers towards more lucrative markets in New York or Los Angeles, and work constantly to provide both a steady income for their theatres and some degree of stability for the people who work there. All of us look on with dismay as former performance spaces are torn down or converted to other uses because of the unrelenting pressure of real estate speculation—and yet all the while there are more performance spaces every year. Suddenly North Beach has less than half the theatres it had a few years ago and the downtown theatre district is virtually dead for months at a time, except for the steady diet of one act plays at the One Act Theatre. Meanwhile a whole new theatre district has grown up in the Mission District.

All of us who write about it or who work in it harbor a strong desire that San Francisco's theatre world would settle down long enough for us to get a grip on it. Yet, more than likely, that very inconstancy, that continual mutability, is the foundation for what has been for the last decade one of the most exciting theatre centers in the world. ☐

BERNARD WEINER

If It's THEATRE You Want . . .

Ten years ago, the theatre scene in San Francisco was relatively quiet. William Ball's American Conservatory Theatre was the only resident professional repertory company in town. Though there were a handful of small, Equity waiver troupes—and the San Francisco Mime Troupe was still actively engaged in open-air performances—audiences tended to ignore most of this in favor of ACT or the big-name-star touring shows that occasionally passed through.

In short, rather dull and stuffy. (People talked of the departed San Francisco Actors Workshop with more than the usual reverie; it brought excitement and daring to the theatre here during its tenure, from 1952 to 1966.)

However, theatre in San Francisco and environs has boomed during the past five to ten years, both quantitatively (there are approximately 125 functioning theatre groups in the greater Bay Area, and the Nederlander chain has use of three large houses for its touring Broadway shows: the Orpheum, Golden Gate and Curran theatres) and qualitatively.

This explosion of theatre activity repeatedly has led visiting critics from both the East Coast and England in recent years to observe that the three cities one now must pay attention to in the English-speaking world for innovative theatre are New York, London, and San Francisco.

ACT is no longer the only show in town; in fact, last year the California Arts Council, in drastically cutting the company's annual grant, suggested that Ball was out of touch with contemporary theatre, and that ACT "had a reputation for having a reputation." The Bay Area Theater Critics Circle has paid only scant attention to ACT in recent years, as the level of the company's productions has slipped. While the company can still present the classics in wonderful fashion, the action has flowed to such smaller, feisty resident companies as the Eureka Theater Company, the Magic Theater, the Julian Theater, the Berkeley Stage Company, the Berkeley Repertory Theater.

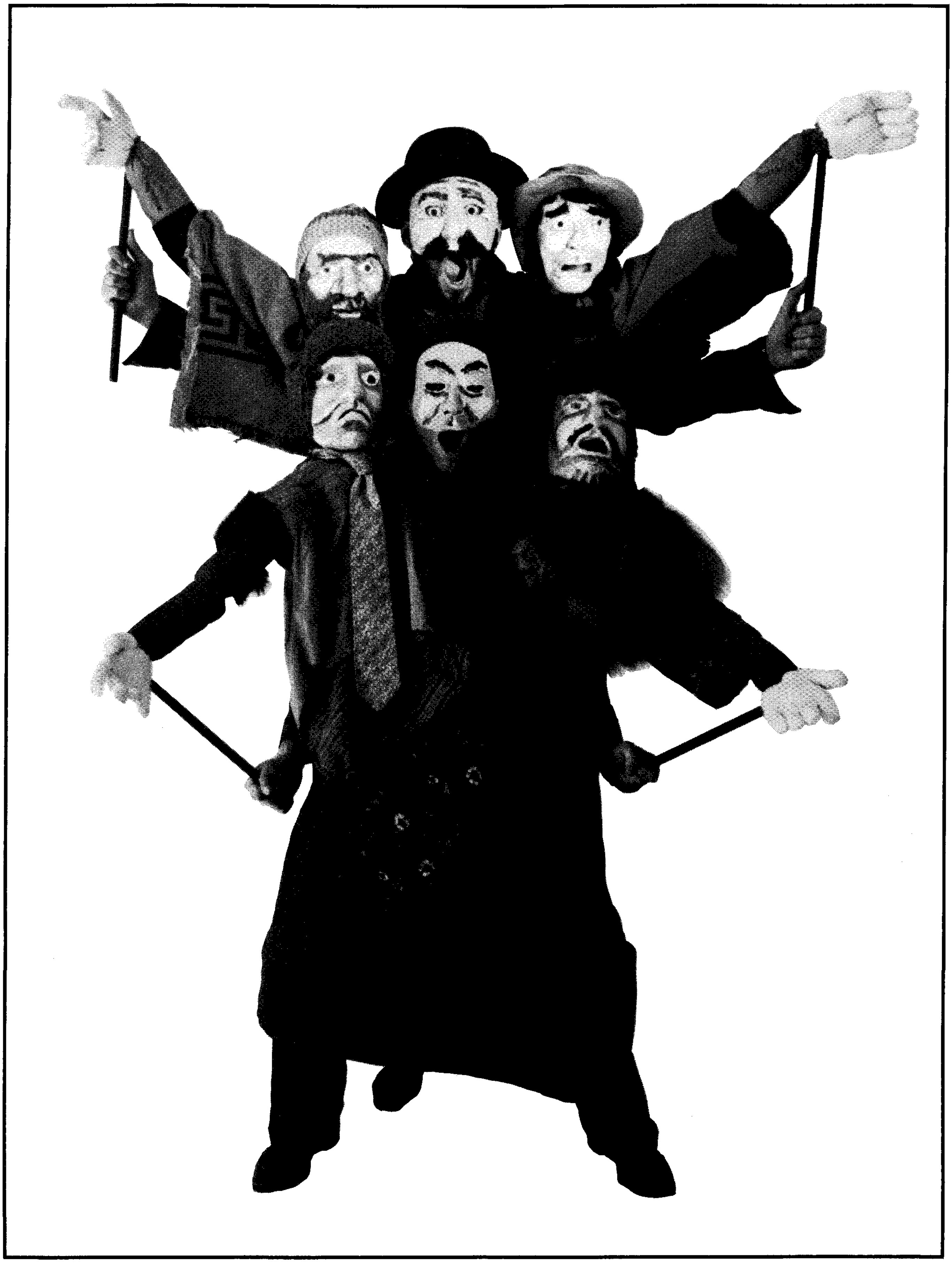
The Bay Area has established its reputation in recent years, nationally and internationally, among the theatre cognescenti in three main areas: political theatre, experimental theatre and the presentation of new plays.

Why this should be so can be found in the history of the place. San Francisco has lured adventurers, artists, and assorted weirdos ever since the bay and gold were discovered, in that order. The community was wide open then, to just about every sort of visitor, no matter what his or her persuasion, and it remains so today.

It is not surprising, then, that some of the most significant developments in modern American culture started in the free-wheeling San Francisco area: the Beat movement in poetry and prose of the 1950s, the college rebellion of the early and mid-'60s, the rock music of the flower-child, psychedelic late-'60s and early '70s, the experimental theatre and performance-art breakthroughs of the '70s and '80s.

There are few moral restrictions on what an artist can do in the Bay Area; it costs far less to do it here than in, say, New York or Los Angeles; one can "fail" here with a project and still maintain a reputation and an audience for the next time out; the lifestyle is "laid back"; the geography and natural beauty stunning; the local critics are often supportive; national and international troupes and artists pass through the Bay Area regularly, performing at festivals (there are three major ones annually: the People's Theater Festival, the San Francisco International Theater Festival, and the Bay Area Playwrights Festival) or on their own, thus enriching the artistic humus. In short, the Bay Area is a kind of fertile farm for the innovative theatre artist.

Political: San Francisco long has had a reputation as a politically progressive place; unions always were strong, and there was even a general strike, in 1934. So it's not surprising to find a long history of politically committed theatre here, ranging from the outrageous cartooning of the San Francisco Mime Troupe to active ethnic theatres (a host of new black companies, an Asian American troupe, several gay theatres, feminist troupes, etc.) to new plays about the assassination by ex-Supervisor Dan



A traveling Jewish theatre

White of San Francisco's Mayor Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk. (There was one such play last season—presented by the Illustrated Stage Company, which made front-page news with its revelations of White's lenient prison treatment and political conspiracy theories—and there are at least two more due out in the next several months, one by Obie Award-winner Emily Mann, author of "Still Life.")

There are socially-committed troupes to the north of San Francisco (the Dell 'Arte Players Company in Blue Lake) and to the south (Luis Valdez' El Teatro Campesino in San Juan Bautista)—and both regularly try out their new works here. But it is the San Francisco Mime Troupe that is the heart and soul of left-liberal theater activity in Northern California, and it has really been hitting its stride in the past several years, first with a trilogy of plays (authored by the talented Joan Holden) that took on Reagan's domestic and international policies, as well as his "Moral Majority" supporters; and now with plays that center on the nuclear issue, power, and weaponry. Their classy, entertaining productions have walked off with numerous awards, have attracted huge crowds (in the Bay Area and beyond, on statewide, national and international tours), and have succeeded to some extent in helping suggest liberal-left options.

"The Bay Area, especially in the past five years, has become a mecca for experimentalists of all stripes. . . ."

Experimental: The Bay Area, especially in the past five years, has become a kind of Mecca for theatrical experimentalists and performance-artists of all stripes. Part of this lure can be explained by the historical openness of the city described above, part to the availability of performance venues specializing in these presentations, part to the sympathetic reception accorded such art in recent years by granting agencies and reviewers.

Among the experimental troupes or solo artists that have originated in, or moved to, the Northern California area—many of them going on to tour in New York and Europe—are: George Coates Performance Works, the Blake Street Hawkeyes, the Flying Karamazov Brothers, Snake Theater (now Antenna and Nightfire Theaters), Bill Irwin, Geoff Hoyle, Soon 3, William Talen, Moving Men Theater Company, A Traveling Jewish Theater, Jack Reynolds-Suzanne Hellmuth, Ellen Sebastian, Delta Carnival, Nightletter Theater, Sam Shepard, Joseph Chaikin, John O'Keefe, Leonard Pitt, Winston Tong, the Pickle Family Circus, et al.

It is these artists that have enlivened the theatre scene to such an extent—often mixing technological breakthroughs with their puppets or kinetic sculptures or film work or laser beams or whatever—that producers and festival organizers from all over the world feel bound to come here regularly, to check out the latest.

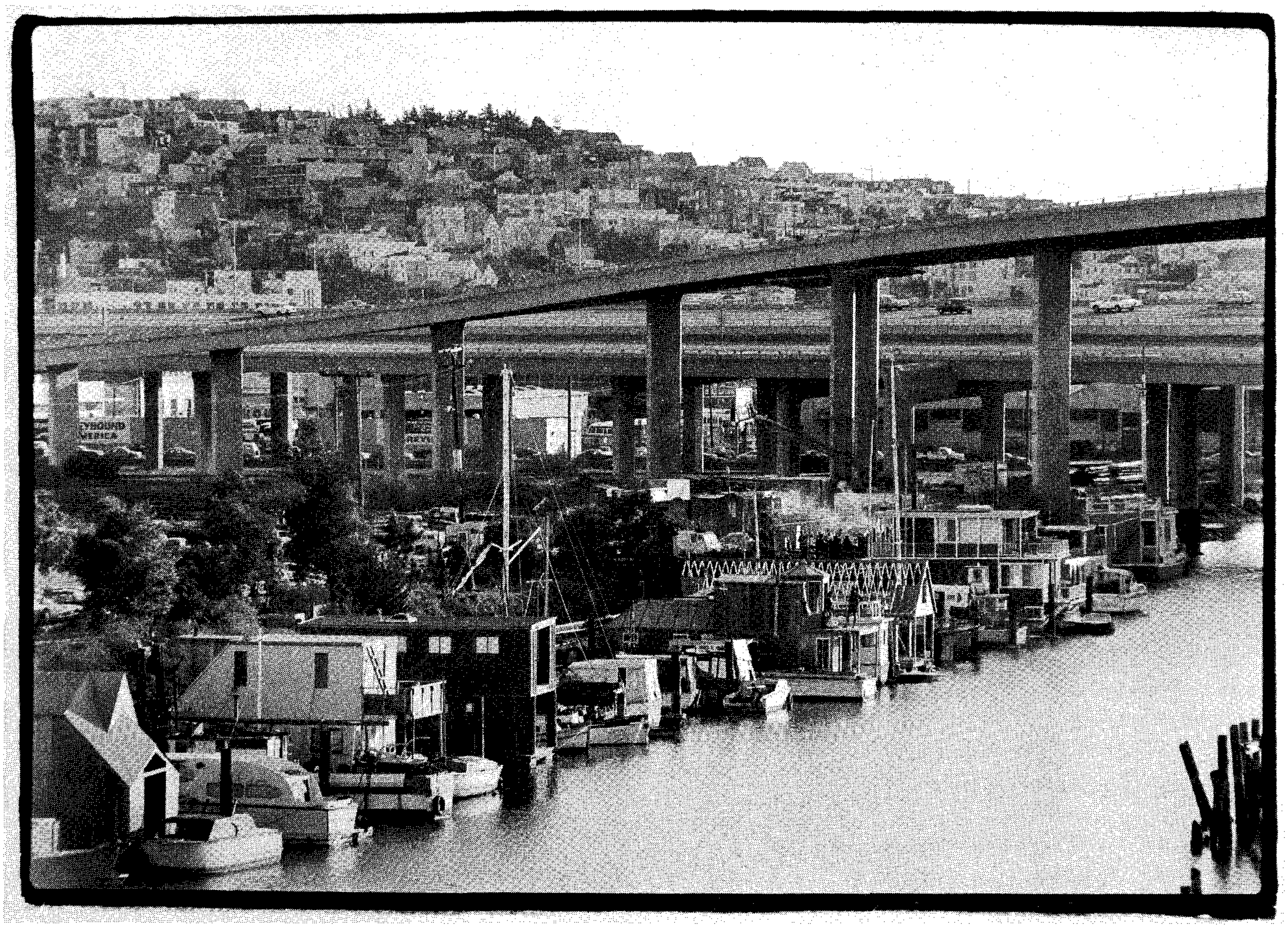
Perhaps the most creative and prolific of these theatre artists, at the time of this writing, are Antenna Theater's Chris Hardman (his "Vacuum" took New York and Europe by storm, and his "Artery," likewise in New York and the Spoleto Festival-U.S.A.), Nightfire Theater's Laura Farabough (with "Surface Tension," "Femme Fatale," "Obedience School," and she's devising a swimming-pool show for the Olympics Arts Festival in Los Angeles), George Coates Performance Works (his "are are," along with "The Way of How," the latter of which toured Europe and New York, earning rave reviews), Nightfire Theater's Sydney Carson ("Mind-freight"), Soon 3's Alan Finneran (his "performance sculptures," such as "Renaissance Radar," "Voodoo Automatic," and "A Wall in Venice" have received great attention in Europe and elsewhere), A Traveling Jewish Theater's Corey Fisher-Albert Greenberg (last year, their "The Last Yiddish Poet" and "Coming from a Great Distance" created quite a stir at the Jewish Theater Festival in Israel), Geoff Hoyle-Bill Irwin-Larry Pisoni (three clowns out of Pickle Family Circus tradition, who tour widely), Bill Talen (a storyteller par excellence), Ellen Sebastian (an expert in location plays).

New plays: The Bay Area long has been a place where new plays of the more traditional, scripted sort can be tried out at far less risk, and cost, than elsewhere. A show that might run anywhere from $50,000 to several hundred thousand to mount in, say, New York, often can be workshopped here for a tenth of that amount. Perhaps that factor, as well as the ability to try out plays here relatively free of commercial and national media pressure, is what has led a wide variety of award-winning playwrights to settle here: in addition to Pulitzer Prize-winners Sam Shepard and Charles Gordone, one could name Michael McClure, Ed Bullins, Adele Edling Shank, Luis Valdez, and Joan Holden; such up-and-comers as John O'Keefe, Leon Martell-Beth Ruscio, Carole Braverman, John Robinson, Martin Epstein, Robert Alexander, Norah Holmgren, R.A. Shiomi, and numerous others; and such involved, internationally known theatre critics as Martin Esslin (dramaturg for the Magic Theater), Ruby Cohn and Theodore Shank.

For further notes on theatre in the Bay Area, NAR readers are invited to page 75 and Lawrence Sturhahn's 'Performance' column.

MISSION CREEK, SAN FRANCISCO:
Portrait of an Endangered Neighborhood

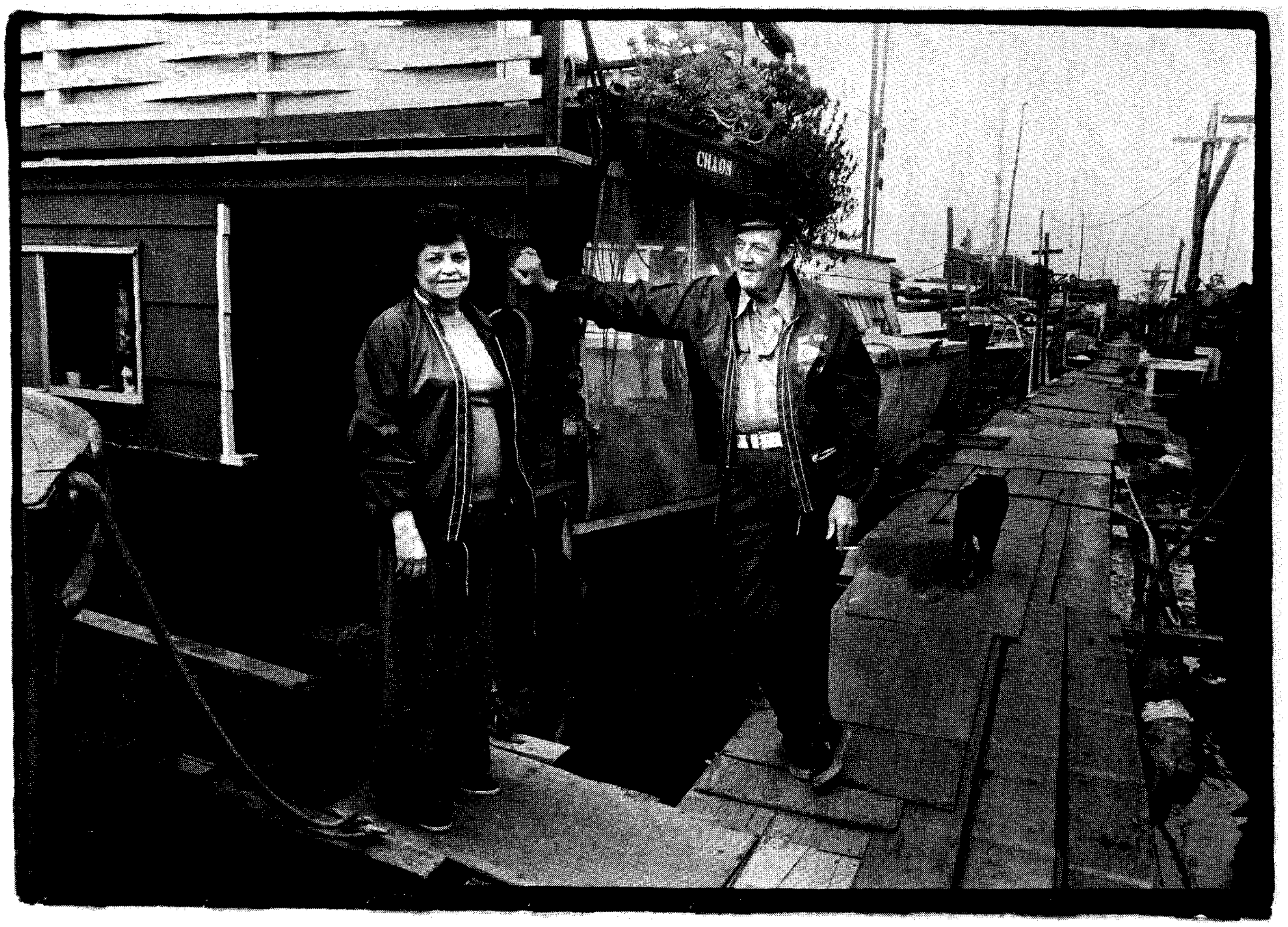
Article and Photographs by Ed Buryn



One of the surprising things about the Mission Creek neighborhood of San Francisco is that until April of this year, hardly anyone knew it was there. Even in a city famous for its pocket neighborhoods and mini-climates, Mission Creek has the lowest profile of all—fewer than thirty people living on houseboats alongside a freeway in a sunny bayside industrial warehouse district. Mission Creek today is a short canal that stubs into San Francisco Bay about a mile south of downtown, the outflow of a once-navigable natural creek that flowed from the vicinity of historic Mission Dolores, where the city itself began over two centuries ago. The present narrow engineered waterway is all that remains of Mission Bay, which up until a century ago was a large expanse of tidal marshland abounding with birds and fish, sailing boats and millyards.

This year Mission Creek finally became well-known to its own city, making all the local headlines with the announcement of its imminent demise, euphemistically called "development." The Southern Pacific Corporation, which owns the adjacent 195 acres because of early-day land grants for railroad easements, has formally proposed to develop Mission Creek into a four-billion-dollar urban showcase including 16 highrise towers for offices and condominiums. The SP proposal to the SF Planning Commission in April represents the largest redevelopment scheme ever proposed in the United States, one which would add almost 50% to the existing office space (up to 18 million square feet), and add 7,200 condominium units.* No low-income housing is provided for in the SP plan, nor any schools, nor any provision for displaced warehouse

The photos with this article are from Mission Creek, San Francisco and show the neighborhood as it is today.



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*According to the papers, John Burton, former U.S. Representative and longtime California liberal, accepted in September a job with Southern Pacific to represent the corporation in its efforts to gain approval for the building complex cited in Mr. Buryn's article. In a two-page full-color ad in *Forbes* (August 15, 1983), Southern Pacific headlines the proposed development as "a city inside everyone's favorite city."—*K.L.*

workers and present residents of the area. Among other aspects: the San Francisco skyline would be radically altered, bay views blocked from a wide arc (including Potrero Hill, Bernal Heights, Buena Vista Heights, and Upper Market), and the creek itself converted into a 15-acre lagoon for luxury yachts.

Since the land around Mission Creek consists entirely of fill reclaimed from the bay, the question of earthquake hazard arises. At an SP press luncheon, a spokesman responded to this issue: "That's just why we need such high-intensity development—because it's so expensive to build highrises. We have to sink pilings all the way down into the bedrock. In an earthquake, the fill liquifies, and the buildings float like bottles." So that's the story of Mission Creek: once it floated ships, today it floats birds and houseboats, and tomorrow it may float buildings, like bottles.

The Conservancy has published a photo-illustrated book called Mission Creek, San Francisco, which comes with membership. Interested NAR readers may send the $10 membership fee to: Mission Creek Conservancy, 300 Channel Street, San Francisco, CA 94107.

"once Mission Creek floated ships, tomorrow it may float buildings. . . ."

What's happening here is that SP has decided to go into big-time real-estate with its old land-grant holdings. Question: Who is going to occupy what is effectively a vast new "city" of high-tech, high-cost, high-density commercial space? It's being quietly speculated that the entire project may be a response to the fact that the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong is going to lose its lease in 1997 and revert back to China; that change will undoubtedly spill off enormous amounts of investment capital and create an unprecedented demand for commercial space around the entire Pacific Basin. San Francisco stands to become the major "beneficiary" of this epochal transfer of contemporary industrial power and dollars, and SP plans to be the main mover. Interestingly, Southern Pacific in the 1960s gave the city Fontana Towers, a high-rise development so insensitive to its neighbors that the city subsequently enforced a 40-foot height limit on all future development in the industrial Embarcadero sector of the northern waterfront.

One of the first citizens' responses to the SP proposal was the formation of the Mission Creek Conservancy. Founded by members of the Mission Creek Harbor Association and sympathetic friends, their intention is to create a waterway "greenbelt" or natural preserve within the SP project. The Conservancy is offering subscription memberships to raise money for defending the neighborhood, sponsoring public events to acquaint more natives and tourists with the area, and publicizing its endangered status. Battle lines are being drawn; the fate of the neighborhood will be decided with the next few years. ☐

GUYS AND GAYS

SIDNEY PETERSON

We have no idea where we are going.
—*Kenneth Clark*

Once upon a time, a long time ago, I found myself in a small fishing village off the coast of British Columbia in the company of an aging Kwakiutl. This amiable old man, upon learning that I was from San Francisco, offered to return to the mainland, seek out the tallest tree in the forest and carve it into a totem pole, which he would then present to my fantastic city in the interest of cementing the relationship between our respective tribes. He envisaged a kind of municipal potlatch in which the mayor and various other civic dignitaries would receive his gift and respond in kind.

It would be the tallest totem pole in the world and it would bestow honor and glory upon the city that possessed it as well as upon the man who carved it. Naturally, the question of appropriate totems arose. I remember the conversation well.

"What are your totems?" the old man asked.

"Well, there is the bear," I replied.

"I see," said the old man. "We too have bears. They are the crest of the Gigilqam clan of the Goasila. There are two kinds. One is the ordinary grizzly and the other is the helper of the Great Cannibal of the North. It is their function to punish transgressors. What are the legends about your bear?"

"He too was a grizzly," I said, "represented on the flag of what is called the Bear Flag Revolt, along with a red star."

"Ah," the old man sighed. "Communism."

"No," I said. "American. It was all part of the takeover of the west."

"We will use a part of this bear," said the old man. "Perhaps the large mouth."

"You speak the truth," I said. "The Bear Flag Revolt was remarkable for the amount of talk and the lack of killing."

"What else? You must have other totems."

"There is the phoenix," I said. "If San Francisco has a fault it is the one named after San Andreas. With the quakes come fires. The last big one destroyed most of the city, which then rose from its ashes like the mythical bird."

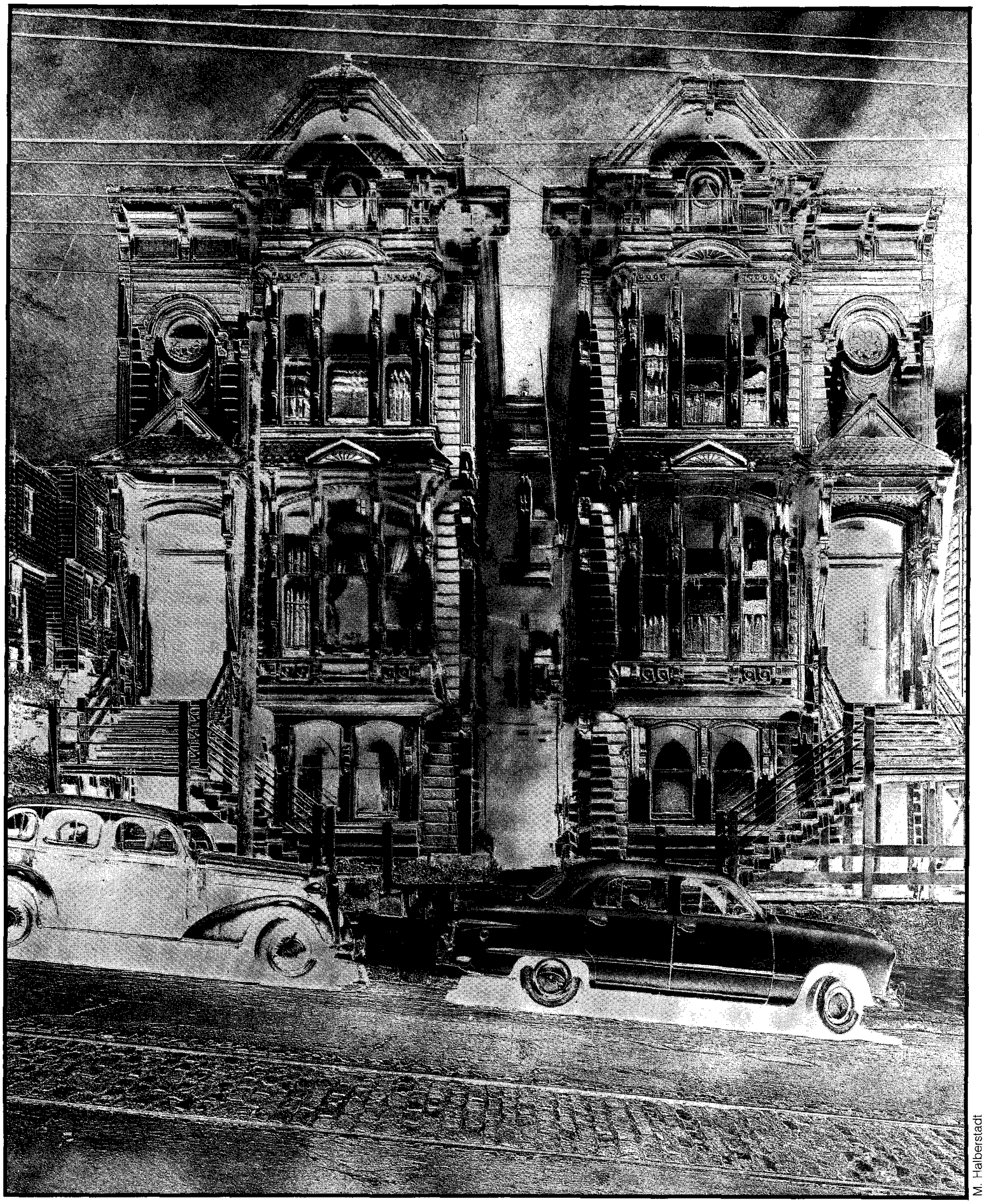
"Will this happen again?"

"Of course."

"We will include the phoenix. A myth has many layers. These layers have many meanings, which can be arranged in lines or columns and each level refers to some other level up, down or across, or any way you choose to read it. It is my impression that your bear has become a Teddy Bear who haunts your woods disguised as Smokey."

When I say that nothing came of this ambitious scheme to honor a great city and, incidentally, ennoble an old man, I don't quite mean nothing. For years the question of suitable totems for this city, totems that could be read every which way, has bothered me. Now, with the hindsights of the '60s and '70s behind me, not to mention the '50s, the '40s, the '30s, the '20s and beyond, all the way back to the Golden Age of my early childhood in No

"[This is] the city it is no longer fashionable to call Baghdad-by-the Bay. . . ."



M. Halberstadt

There Oakland, I have, I think, found at least one. If I ever run into my Kwakiutl friend again I will present it to him and if he is still active, which I doubt, he will, perhaps, carve his pole and have his multinational potlatch. I will tell him about the apocryphal account of the founding of the foothill town of Auburn, first known as Wood's Dry Diggings, but so much more suitable for the West Bay than for Auburn that I cannot imagine any thinking person can object to such a displacement. We live, after all, not only in a State but a state of mind in which the geography of the imagination has become a legitimate branch of cartography, whereby the Gironde, the Dordogne and the Garonne now flow into the Bay and the whole State has been tinted with what the French call "the shade of Burgundy." Such Eucharistic conversions have become commonplace. They are even chic. And besides, displacement is an essential part of the visionary art of the Northwest Coast.

A wandering group of miners finds a woman's hat in a field and is inspired to stage what has been called a totem fandango. Three hundred red-shirted males attend, each with a bottle of brandy. The hat is placed on top of a stake draped with a blanket. A smoked ham in a "miner's cradle" adds a nutritional and maternal note. The miners take turns rocking the cradle and pouring brandy down the neck of the simulated female. Those who are not rocking or pouring dance with each other, men with patches on the seats of their pants being told off to play the role of women. The ball lasts as long as the brandy, and the town rises on a bed of empty bottles. A full account of this urban inaugural myth may be found in Margot's *Taming of the Forty Niner*, published in 1955.

Such fandangos were common all over the mining country in the period predating the reproductive cycle memorialized in the degraded symbolism of the glorification of the prostitute as a kind of Great Mother, as in the historic jingle about the Argonauts coming in '49 and the whores in '51 and twixt them both making the Native Son. It was a time on the mining camp circuit when Little Nells and Gertrudes in drag revived the traditional theatrical transvesticism of earlier centuries and if the ambiguities introduced into their performances were accompanied by a little passive pederasty on the side, so what? It was all *faute de mieux* and burlesque and as much a part of the gold-seeking scene as red shirts and California hats. Nor was there an Eliade around to dampen the spirits by seeking in such antics symbolic restorations of Chaos or a regression to the primordial and homogeneous and the emergence of a symbolic androgyny.

Without calling in a cosmologist, let us simply examine the hat, the ham, the blanket-draped stake, the cradle, the bottles and the patches. At least two things stand out. Food and drink. The city that has become a booster's paradise is still celebrated for both. What are the patches if not a symbol of gay pride? The cradle had its day as the prostitute's crib, a day that disappeared long before the so called "promiscuous '70s." As for the mimetic scarecrow, doesn't it persist in the histrionic image of the drag queen? I think it does. Students of local history who have difficulties in making such connections should consult their favorite gurus, now mostly suburban, or the shamans of their choice wherever.

There are, of course, other ways of looking at it all. One can take more purely linear views. For example, without going all the way back to the beginning, start with *centennial* of the totemic fandango in 1948, a significant date not only in local history but in the history of American art. The focus was on the California School of Fine Arts on Chestnut Street, on the birth pangs of Abstract Expressionism and the early development of the avant garde film movement. The central figure for AE was Clyfford Still, and no red-shirted, California-hatted miner ever stood more four-squarely for a counter culture. Much that started then was continued by the Beat Generation of the '50s, with the focus shifting to coffee houses on the upper end of Grant Avenue, where the private visions of the original Beats so quickly went public. The success of the coffee houses drew the attention of the police. Too many were getting into the act, including children, who were chased out as far as the Panhandle, where they paused only to catch their breaths in order to move on to the Haight-Ashbury. The Flower Children emerged. The flowers wilted and the children became Hippies and a full-blown head culture followed as the night the day. All the seeds were planted for the '70s.

Such *House that Jack Built* (Kerouac?) accumulative rhyming and linear conceptions of what happens have more to do with the way history may be construed than with history itself. One may find more truth in the structure of a myth read every which way. Let's face it. Life is complicated. It gets more so every day. It's not a game, with Chestnut to Grant to Haight-Ashbury to be understood in terms of Tinker to Evers to Frank Chance. A city is not a ball club. It is something more than an entire league of such clubs. And among all the other things that it is, it is part of the World Village. The city it is no longer fashionable to call Baghdad-by-the-Bay is rapidly being incorporated into that Village, with all the inevitability of the fog creeping in on little cat feet. It survives, like all those other cities, in the shadow of the bomb. Nineteen eighty-four looms and we'll soon see whether Orwell was right or merely a little off in his timing. Meanwhile, the fandango is in full swing, with or without identifying patches. Robert Duncan once called San Francisco a *collage* city, and the latest paste-up reveals a collection of minorities with a vast potential for not getting along with each other. An apocalyptic mood prevails. The sexual revolution has been transmuted into a passion for trading in real estate. And so on and so on. There seems no end to the possible list of shock and schlock, past, present and future.

With all that and more, much more, all is not, however, gloom and doom. I suppose we may take comfort in the wise words of Sallustius: "myths are things that never happen, but always are." A healthy community needs its past. We have no pole to commemorate, then, but we still have our myths. The elements of the fandango remain in place. The bear may be a Teddy Bear but it still growls, and the fabled bird will rise again because it is in its nature to do just that. I hope. ☐

SAN FRANCISCO: THE MAKING OF A UNI-CLASS CITY

MARK CIABATTARI

Lawrence Sturhahn

St. Patrick's Church. Its fine early Gothic line dignifies the area South of Market, pocked with vacant, brick-strewn lots, long devastated by urban renewal. Transamerica pyramid. Its rare architecture sets the style for the San Francisco skyline. The $100,000,000 George R. Moscone Convention Center is to be the centerpiece for Yerba Buena, the planned renewal project which is projected to convert the area South of Market adjoining St. Patrick's Church into a chic array of hotels, gardens, shops and a theater.

These three landmark buildings are symbols of distinct phases of San Francisco history. Dating from 1868 and surviving the fire and earthquake of 1906—a scorched shell to be rebuilt as a splendid survivor—St. Patrick's Church, located on Mission between Third and Fourth, was a focal point for Irish worshippers from the 1870s to World War II, when the South of Market was the largest, most distinctly working-class neighborhood in San Francisco. The other two landmark buildings date from World War II and represent the latest phase of San Francisco history. Since then, San Francisco has gone beyond its working class past and become a mostly middle-class city. The Transamerica pyramid, finished in 1972, was the most unusual of the many high-rise office buildings that would provide thousands of new jobs for the great influx of white collar workers who would replace the city's working class. The Moscone Convention Center, opened in 1982, furthered the middle class ambiance of the city by drawing mostly affluent tourists and conventioneers to "everyone's favorite city."

The recent historical transformation of San Francisco from a working class to a middle class city raises certain questions: What was gained in the transformation? What was lost? How did it come about? What is the net effect for the city?

According to census figures, San Francisco is growing progressively more middle class: in 1950, 44 percent of all San Franciscans were white collar workers; in 1960, 52 percent, and in 1970, 61 percent. Frederick Wirt, in his book on modern San Francisco's politics, *Power in the City*, uses these figures also to demonstrate the proportional decline of the city's lower income group, including unskilled blue collar workers who have increasing difficulty finding work.

From the late nineteenth century until the mid-twentieth century, the majority of the citizens of San Francisco were working class; the most noted of the city's historians, Walton Bean, in his *Boss Ruef's San Francisco*, wrote of turn-of-the century San Francisco that it was "a union town *par excellence*." Shocking the wealthy of 1900s America, San Franciscans elected the president of a labor union, Eugene E. Schmitz, as Mayor on the Union Labor Party ticket for an unprecedented three terms—in 1901, 1903, and again in 1905 by a whopping majority of 56.6 percent of the general vote.

Political support for Mayor Schmitz derived largely from the South of Market neighborhood, called "South of the Slot" in reference to the cable slot on Market Street. In his story, "South of the Slot," Jack London, born in 1873 near Third and Brannon, wrote of this turn-of-the century San Francisco that it "was divided by the Slot. North of the Slot were the theaters, hotels and shopping district, the banks and the staid, respectable business houses. South of the Slot were the factories, slums, laundries, machine shops, boiler works and the abodes of the working class."

Here in Jack London's world was a working-class way of life unique to San Francisco: predominantly unskilled workers who rented (in contrast to the city's skilled workers, who owned their homes, mainly in the Mission), teamsters, stevedores, warehousemen with large families. The neighborhood was overwhelmingly Irish with a sprinkling of Jews, Japanese, and Swedes, and it was therefore predominantly Catholic, the faith of the neighborhood's Germans as well as its Irish. The neighborhood was the largest Catholic parish west of Chicago; St. Patrick's was the pride of the Irish, and on its steps after a Sunday Mass, before retiring to a neighborhood saloon to carry on the same conversation, the men talked politics: the politics of City Hall, the politics of unions (many of which, like the Teamsters and Coast Seamen's Union, had been founded South of Market), the politics of the great waterfront strike of 1901, which in its extent foreshadowed the city's famous 1934 General Strike.

In the 1930s, San Francisco continued to be a union stronghold. The WPA Guide to the city written in those years stated that "Employers estimate that half the population of San Francisco consists of union members and their families." The South of Market area was still strongly working class, but by the 1930s single migratory male workers outnumbered workers with families who were permanent residents in the area. A Dashiell Hammett world, the neighborhood had characteristics well adapted to its transitory work force: inexpensive Greek restaurants and coffee houses, lodging and boarding houses and small hotels, second hand stores, employment agencies with blackboards on the street advertising mainly out of town jobs, saloons with back rooms for gambling and numbers, and, for recreation, pool halls, whorehouses, and movie theatres. The area had many missions; St. Patrick's sponsored one where a lumberjack or a miner who had wintered in the city and gone through his "stake" could get free food and lodging. Here, South of Market, Alvin Averbach writes in his fine essay on the history of this neighborhood, was a "shelter for an industrial reserve army"—single men to be mustered for seasonal work outside of San Francisco.

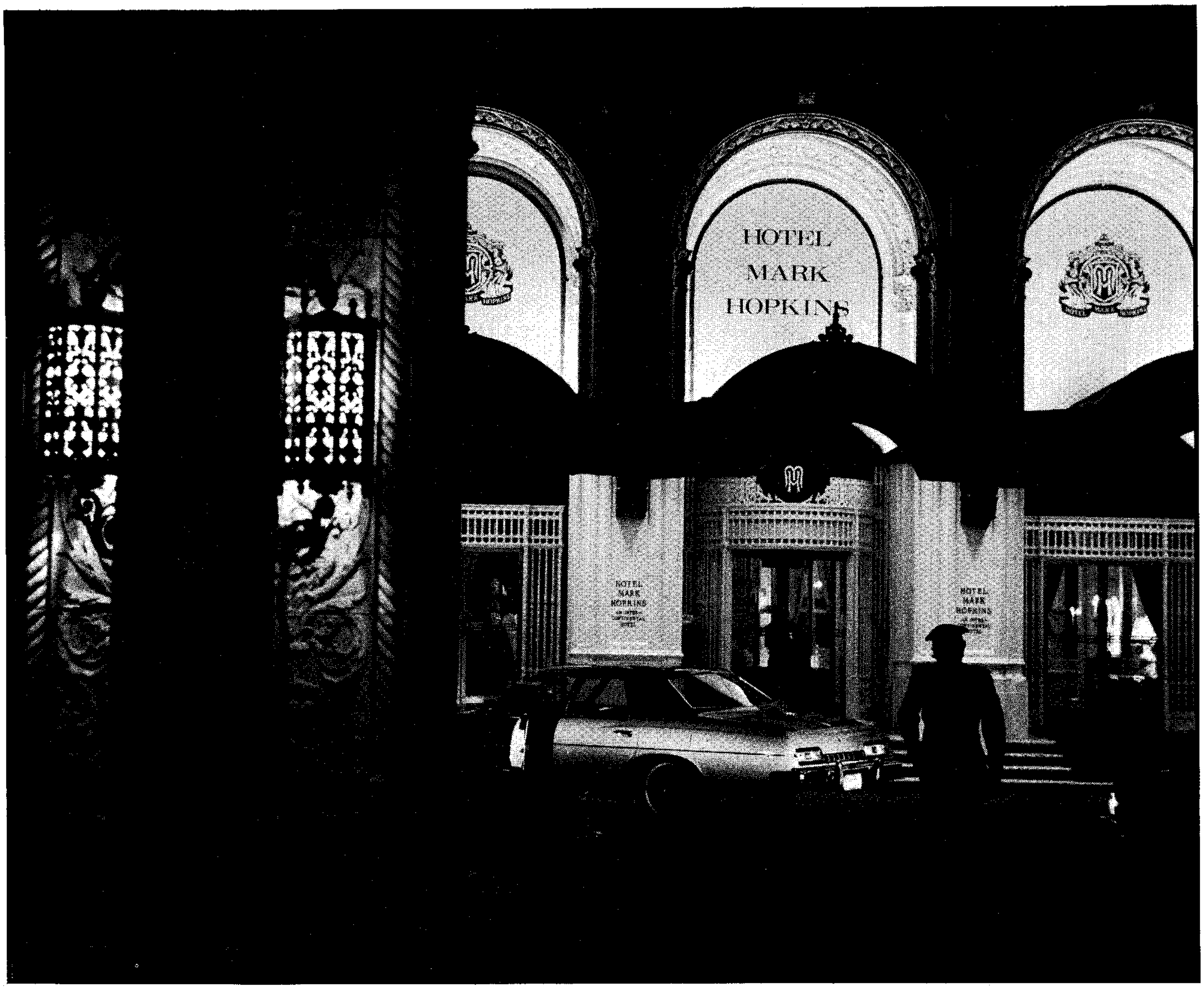
During World War II, with the city as a supply and staging area for the war in the Pacific, San Francisco became even more a blue collar city. "During the war years," writes Oscar Lewis in his history of San Francisco, "the number of factories increased by one third, while the number of industrial workers more than doubled."

After the war, a new, white collar San Francisco began to emerge, the first seeds of which had been planted in the earlier Depression Decade, when the completion of the city's great bridges, the Golden Gate and the Bay Bridge, greatly increased the flow of middle class commuters into the city from the suburbs. Many San Franciscans began leaving the city and moving to the suburbs in the post-war decade, and the bridges facilitated their continuing to work in the city.

In an effort to retain its middle class, the City of San Francisco began in the late 1940s a long process of urban renewal that continues to this day. It changed the face of the city. Older residential and commercial areas were torn down to be "renewed" by new urban developments that furthered the gentrification of the city. Union officials enthusiastically promoted the construction jobs that would result from this massive urban renewal. Much working class housing was torn down; large portions of such low income neighborhoods as the Western Addition and Fillmore were leveled. Middle class housing sprouted; most spectacular were the new multi-story, high-rise apartment houses of Nob and Russian Hills. Downtown in the 1950s and 1960s, skyscrapers appeared as new corporate headquarters and office buildings were built. New white collar jobs multiplied. In the early 1970s, BART was completed so more suburban commuters could flow to and from the city. Then, in the mid-1970s, with rising gasoline prices making automobile commuting more costly, many people began moving back to the city from the suburbs. The consequent buying pressure inflated housing costs; soon, owning a home in San Francisco was like membership in an exclusive club.

During this renewal of the city in the 1950s and 1960s, Wirt, in his political analysis of this period, emphasizes that the city's labor unions enjoyed unprecedented power. The most powerful unions were on a par with the corporations; their union officials joined with corporate representatives to plan further urban renewal. On the boards of the city agencies responsible for planning and supervising the new building—the Redevelopment Agency, the City Planning Commission, the Board of Building Permits—there were many appointees from the city's unions. Mayors John F. Shelley and Joseph Alioto in the 1960s and early 1970s were both supported by the city's unions and, in turn, both Mayors were strong supporters of redevelopment.

But there was great irony in the fate of labor in San Francisco in these years. Blue collar labor was building a city that excluded most blue collar workers except for an élite of the most skilled and highly paid, who had incomes suited to the city's high cost of living. From laboring jobs on the construction sites, many of the less skilled workers went into service jobs in hotels and restaurants, but overall there was a net loss of non-skilled jobs in the city. Shipping went to Oakland, which modernized its piers, while San Francisco made its piers into tourist attractions. Acknowledging the problem, Mayor Dianne Feinstein, in her 1981 article "San Francisco: Striding Towards the 21st Century" in *USA Today,* wrote that one of the basic future goals of San Francisco was to strive "to retain and build up its blue collar jobs base."



Lawrence Sturhahn

Having grown so dominantly white collar in the decades after World War II, San Francisco was a city that symbolized more than any other metropolis in the country the rising affluence of Americans since 1950. Here was a whole city that was rising up out of the working class to become middle class. Its citizens were enacting a collective American Dream.

In this time, from once having lived South of the Slot and in the Mission, the Irish, Germans, and Italians moved up the social ladder; these groups were now the "arrived minorities." They had realized the Dream, and they moved down the Peninsula or to the East Bay. The South of Market was abandoned to the transients and the welfare poor, many of whom were willing to work but found it increasingly difficult to find work in a San Francisco where unskilled jobs were diminishing.

The new San Francisco was not only middle class; it set styles and constantly refined middle-class living to the richness of a Godiva chocolate truffle. What the French would call *haute bourgeoise* became the standard for San Francisco, a city with no other rival as the Paris of America, renowned for its beauty and gracious living.

In this new San Francisco is a tendency to submerge the memory of the city's earlier working class history. That history remains virtually unknown to those who have moved to the city in droves in the last thirty years. Native San Franciscans under the age of thirty have never learned about their city prior to 1950, when it was predominantly working class.

In 1950, San Francisco-born novelist Irving Stone wrote, "San Francisco was always a tough labor town, just as willing to settle its arguments with stones, clubs or brass knuckles as with conciliatory words," Even as he wrote those words, the city was in the process of becoming more genteel. Today, few San Franciscans would describe their city the way Stone did. In fact, many San Franciscans might be genuinely embarrassed to hear their city described in words more often associated with Brooklyn or Pittsburgh.

The working class way of life in San Francisco is remembered by a dwindling minority. Recently in McCarthy's, one of the oldest Irish bars in the city's working class Mission District, two retired workingmen reminisced about the passing of a way of life.

"Back then you sweated to work, not to exercise," said a retired teamster who had lived South of Market while working the docks in the 1930s.

His big, gray-haired partner, who described himself as having been "nothing but a working stiff" all his life, agreed. Imagine before the jobs were all automated, he suggested to the teamster, coming home from a day working the docks and then jogging for five miles before going to sleep. They both laughed.

"In neighborhoods like the old South of Market," the teamster said later, "people stuck together more. Everybody was in the soup together. If there was a strike, the mom and pop grocery gave credit to the families of strikers in the neighborhood. I remember it happening. Think you could get that from a supermarket today?"

A loss of that sense of community might be part of the price paid for the great material progress achieved by San Franciscans in the last thirty years and more. ☐

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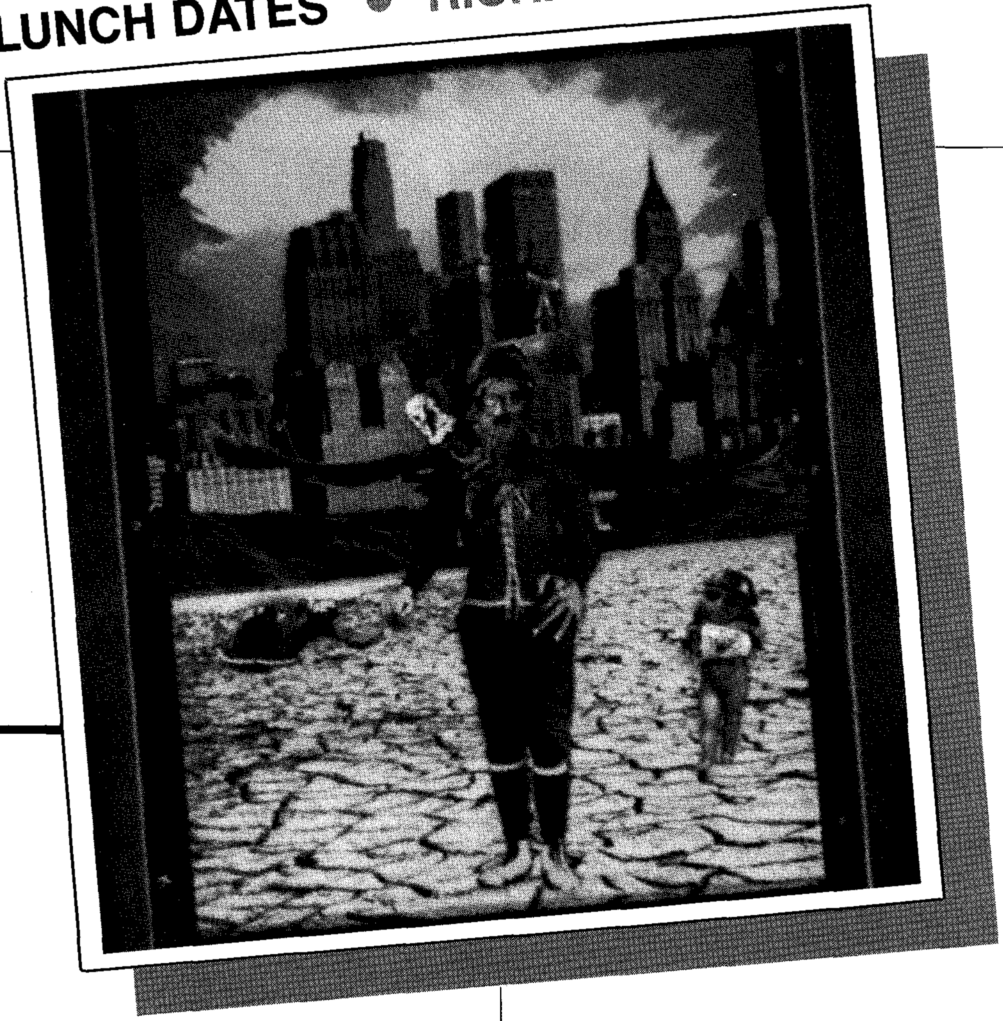
LUNCH DATES

RICHARD ABRONS



There came a time in Martin's life when he knew he had crossed over into the ranks of the older. It wasn't a sudden realization or feeling, but a gradual perception that took perhaps two years to sink in so totally that it was true when he shaved in the morning and when he put on his pajamas at night. It was true even though he looked younger than his age. People wouldn't believe he was forty-nine. His business associates and friends looked older than he, but they said they didn't feel it; they felt thirty-five. Despite gray hair, balding heads and paunches, they felt thirty-five. Forty-nine was what he felt, despite a full head of brown hair, a body trim from jogging and tennis, and a boyish look in his eyes. He did not like feeling forty-nine. He did not like it at all. But certain pathways of levitation were not open to him—confidence in the government, belief in God, the infinity of time. Honesty was his bed of roses and of thorns.

In the morning, Martin walked briskly twenty-three blocks down Madison Avenue to his office at the accounting firm of Gravely, Higgins. He was an overtaker. Rarely was he overtaken. In the winter he wore a lined raincoat, whereas the competition was bundled to its ears. A hat was as foreign to him as a kilt. The wind whipped his cheeks and eyes; he breathed deeply from his diaphragm and ran to cross streets before the light changed. At the office, he strode purposefully through the halls, worked in rolled up shirtsleeves, and joked with the young secretaries. When his son, David, came to the firm, they said they looked like brothers. He liked hearing that. But he knew he had crossed over into the ranks of the older.

When you're forty-nine and feeling it, relationships take on an added importance. His youth, good looks and winning smile used to make a total statement. Now he needed connections. He needed to be a part of others' lives. He needed the feedback that comes from being a sympathetic ear, a provider of support, an astute commentator on a particular life or life in general. Mainly, he connected at lunch.

His lunches—usually at his club, where the atmosphere was elegant and unhurried—picked up the strands of lapsed time between last encounters. He questioned closely, bringing himself up to date on his friend, and was questioned in return. With the facts disposed of, feelings would be explored. There was an attempt to hear the melody behind the words, to cut through the act, to catch the basic plot of the soap opera. He encouraged openness by being open himself. At the end, he would advise, point out, highlight, somehow contribute to his friend's awareness. It was important that his companion should leave this lunch affected, rewarded. The connection would then not only have been reëstablished, but more firmly made.

He was a people collector. His lunches were usually booked a week in advance. He was proud of the variety of his collection. There were other accountants, stockbrokers, businessmen in all shapes and sizes, several black, fellow board members of a settlement house, a woman writer recently separated, a young actress from Los Angeles trying to make it in the Big Apple, a homosexual piano teacher, a Puerto Rican woman involved in urban gardening, a psychiatrist desperate to untangle himself from an arthritic, clinging wife, and a dentist anxious to retire to Vermont, who kept going over his assets and expenses to see if that were feasible. It never quite was. And many, many, many more. Once past the pleasantries and into the marrow of their existence, they sang of dreams unfulfilled, or someday to be fulfilled. "Devoutly to be wished," Martin knew, was easy. The consummation eluded.

He was not immune. He had remained a minor partner in the firm despite twenty-four years of service. His marriage was stale. His children were leading their own suspect lives away from home. His occasional affairs had commenced in enchantment and ended in recrimination. Dinner parties held the promise of discovery in anticipation, a touch of it during cocktails, but then came the soporific heavy food and forced conversation ending in semi-stupor and stiff goodbyes. "I had too much wine," he would say to his wife at home. And now he had crossed into the ranks of the older, with a network of friends—co-conspirators in the struggle.

On this crisp October day, when the City is at its best, he was having lunch with Sylvia. Sylvia with the long brown hair and swinging rump, who swiveled her way into his loins (if not his heart) ten years ago, when she was a secretary at the firm. Their affair was long since ended, but they kept in touch. Sylvia had been a tease. She had gloried in her body, dangled it mischievously before the partners, then withdrew it when they reached for the golden prize. He alone had grasped it. But it was a meager affair—squelched between his guilt and her narcissism. He liked Sylvia, and was sorry for her now. Thirty-eight, running to fat, her eyes overpainted, still not married, wanting—at the very least—a child. They couldn't eat at his club, as one of the partners might see them. So they faced each other at the Hotel Gotham—sedate, well lighted, proof that the affair was long past. He brought her up to date on the firm—people who had come and gone. She told him of disappointing lovers and financial restraints. She wished she could afford a face lift.

"What's the point?" he asked. "It doesn't even last."

"Five years," she said.

"Then you have to do it again."

"So what?"

"Better to change your mind than your face," he said.

"I don't have money for a shrink, either."

"You don't have to see a shrink. Just stop playing the coquette. Find a decent guy with a decent job and marry him."

"Sounds so simple," she said. "Where do I find him? Somebody that isn't so damned selfish like Danny, or so God damned immature, like Eric. Somebody like you."

"There are me's all around," he said. "Create another me." (A friend of Martin's had just taken est).

"If I'm going to create, I might as well create Robert Redford. Anyway, what about you?" she asked.

"What about me what?"

"What about leaving Francine? When are you going to take hold of *your* life?"

"I won't stay married forever," he said. "But Joanie's graduating next spring. I'm not going to spoil that."

"That's just a rationalization, Martin. You'll never leave her. Don't you know that?"

"I will," he said, "when the right time comes."

He put his arm around her when they left. "It was great seeing you," he said. "Don't expect so much of your lovers. You make them fail you because you're afraid to commit yourself. Don't look for hurts, and you'll hit on a relationship that will last. Some people find that others never live up to their expectations. Whose fault do you think that is?"

Sylvia looked at him closely. He was about to say something, but she put her finger on his lips.

"You're right," she said finally. "I do look to get hurt. I'm afraid to let anyone in too close."

"That's it," he said. "You're terrific, Sylvia."

"So are you," she said.

He kissed her on the cheek. "I'll be in touch," he said.

The following day, the bright October sunshine had turned into a sullen, overcast sky. A troublesome meeting with a client made him fifteen minutes late for his lunch with Steven Howard, an ex-textile converter recently turned stockbroker. Steve worried about his children. His seventeen year old daughter was fat and getting fatter, and his twelve year old son was painfully shy. Steve felt his children bore treacherous testimony to the love that had been lavished on them. Martin jogged from his building to his club to make up for lost time. Steve was sitting on a couch in the lobby, reading *Business Week*. He was a gentle person with a soft voice. His brow was furrowed. Steve was always concerned. When he wasn't worried about his children, he mused over problems of inflation, the Mideast and crime in the City. He was the only person Martin knew who could frown when he smiled. Now that he was a stockbroker, Steve would be a bear. Martin greeted him warmly—it had been months—apologized for being late, and guided his guest to the main dining room. Victor, the *maitre d'*, led them to a quiet table by the window, which looked out over Madison Avenue thirty floors below, and the West Side. In the distance, between tall buildings, you could usually see the Hudson. But not today. Steve ordered a bloody Mary. Normally, Martin didn't drink at lunch, but he was slightly out of sorts because of the morning. He ordered a dry sherry.

"I have all my clients selling," Steve said. "They're buying gold—directly or Homestake Mining or De Beers. The economy is going to hell. Reagan is not just a dud, let me tell you, he's. . . ."

"How's Annie?" Martin interrupted.

The switch in the conversation didn't faze Steve at all. There was so much ground to cover in these lunches that it was understood that either person could suddenly change direction at any time.

"Gone to seed," Steve said. "Totally gone. Sometimes when I see her, I feel like crying. Other times, I get so mad I'd like to throw her out of the house. She won't tell us what she weighs, but I know it's over two hundred."

"Why don't you get off her back?" Martin suggested. "Don't you see she gets her kicks from what she's doing to you and Carol? If you stop reacting, maybe she'll stop playing her game."

"What game?"

"Getting Mommy and Daddy's goat," Martin said. "Besides, it's tearing you and Carol apart. If you let go, and make it *her* problem, not yours, at the very least, *you'll* feel better. The house will be more relaxed, and it just might happen that she'll decide to lose weight on her own. Anyway, you have nothing to lose by trying, because look at you now."

"Maybe you're right," Steve said. "We do have nothing to lose. Of course, it's easier said than done. What's Joanie going to do after she graduates?"

"She doesn't know," Martin said. "She's living at Cornell with a real weirdo. He has this mass of frizzled hair. He looks like a giant bug. An unwashed bug too. He's against all our values, including some he thinks we have that we don't. She's not our Joanie any more," Martin said sadly.

"Kids can really get to you," Steve said.

"Yes," said Martin.

That night, Martin quarrelled with Francine. It started over a trifle and gathered size insistently, like rolling wet snow down hill into a large ball.

"You don't love me," Francine said. "You don't love me at all."

"I do," he said. "In my way. Besides, my feelings are my own. I have a right to them. I don't like your challenging them all the time."

"You couldn't love anyone," she said. "You have a lot of friends, but you can't love anyone. I may be the only one who knows it, but you're a cold fish, Martin."

"How do you know I couldn't love anyone? How do you know it isn't just *you* I can't love?" he asked.

Francine gasped, as if astonished that her husband had gone beyond the rules of the contest. "That was cruel, Martin," she said. "You deliberately try to hurt me. You're a sadist."

"I'm not a sadist," he said. "What you are is a masochist. But I'm not going to play the sadist for you—no matter how much you want me to. You won't be able to provoke me anymore tonight, because I'm going to bed. But not in here. I don't feel like sleeping in the same room with you—not after all that garbage you've thrown at me."

"So don't," she said. But he could see her expression of guilt and regret. Francine launched their disputes, but she liked to make up at the end. He wouldn't play it her way tonight. He dragged a blanket and his two pillows down to the living room, and slept on the couch. There were no shades on the living room windows. The curtains did a poor job of keeping out the sun. The windows faced east, and the light woke him early in the morning.

At lunch at the club, he told Arlene he was tired and why. Arlene had just separated from her husband. In a way, it was about time. For years, her husband had taken one night off a week to stay over with his girl friend. The next morning, he would call Arlene to tell her how much he loved her. He was charming, attractive and a good provider, and he kept telling Arlene how much he loved her. But he needed his regular night off. It drove her crazy. She would have liked an affair with Martin—probably as much for revenge as anything else—but he was attracted only to her mind. She was an artist—a good one too, with several shows to her credit. What drove Arlene to separation recently was that her husband went from one night to two—still with the same declarations of love the mornings after. Arlene kicked him out and now felt more cleanly about herself, but she was lonely. Where does a high class, intelligent, rational, giving woman of fifty meet men of similar distinction?

"It's hard," Martin admitted, "unless you work in an office. Painting is so solitary."

"But that's what I do," Arlene said. "That's my job."

"You need a man," he insisted. "Don't let your pride stop you from putting yourself in places where men are. Take a course at the New School or the Ninety-Second Street Y. Don't be desperate. Nothing puts off a man like desperation. But get around. You've got to get around."

"I don't know if I'm ready for that," Arlene said.

"When you finally decide you're ready, you'll be over-ready," Martin said. "That's what you want to avoid."

"Are you ever going to leave Francine?" Arlene asked.

"Eventually, I suppose. Who knows?" he said. "But Joanie's graduating next spring. I'm not going to spoil that."

In the afternoon, old man Gravely called him into his office. The partnership had a fiscal year ending in October. Every October, the partners' shares were adjusted for the following fiscal year. Gravely did the adjusting. He was short and plump, with wild white hair like Ben Gurion. He was curt, commanding and tough. Martin had always been uncomfortable in his presence.

"You'll have to go down some, Martin," Gravely said.

"Twenty-four years," Martin said.

"I know. But you don't work that hard. You don't bring in new clients. And we've got some new young turks who practically live at the office."

"Is Schaeffer going down?" Martin asked.

"Don't worry about Schaeffer," the old man said harshly. "That's the trouble. Everybody finds some one person to compare himself to. You think it's easy trying to be fair to twenty-eight partners? Don't you realize they all have a Schaeffer in their head, and they all throw him up to me. Schaeffer's got a Schaeffer too!"

Gravely's voice had risen; his cheeks were flushed; his bushy eyebrows accentuated the darkness of his displeasure. Martin was sorry he had brought up Schaeffer. But Schaeffer never went down, while Martin's percentage, in slow ascendance for many years, was now being annually clipped for halves and quarters. And Schaeffer was a lush. He put in a decent morning, then had three or four martinis at lunch, and came back to the office to dry out during the afternoon. The one thing Schaeffer did well was butter up Gravely. He sent the old man interoffice memos suggesting great activity; he invited the Gravelys to dinner with his few friends of accomplishment; he sent him a book on the care of bonsai (Gravely had gone in for this in recent years—as if the preservation and display of an aged dwarf tree in his living room would be a symbol of the durability of his life). It was embarrassing the way Schaeffer laughed uproariously at Gravely's inept attempts at humor. Martin used to have a higher percentage than Schaeffer. Now his was lower, and the gap was widening.

The way out, of course, was something he had been contemplating for years—going on his own. He would have a small office—on Madison Avenue in the Fifties. He had picked the building. He would hire a young and attractive secretary. Who knows what might develop? Miss McGuire could stay at the firm and collect her pension. His clients would be varied, interesting, and dependent on him for more than tax advice. To his current companions he might add an Italian countess, a professional hockey player, an art dealer or two, a circus clown, a wine grower from upstate. To these—his select—the tax return would be a wedge into their lives. At lunch, he would listen to their problems, their aspirations, and become their counselor.

The day after Gravely's pronouncement, he discussed this with Sumner Stoneham. Victor had led them to his preferred table. Today, the sky was a pale blue and the Hudson clearly visible. Sumner was a lawyer by day and a pianist by night—to the extent the law (a jealous lover) allowed. As a lawyer, he was plodding, meticulous. As a pianist, he soared free. His hands, poised over the keys like an eagle stopped in flight, seemed to express all the skill, wisdom and love that was Sumner. Into those hands he poured his very essence, weaving his body back and forth and raising his face as if in prayer. From these hands, he drew the majesty of Bach, Brahms, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert. Especially Schubert—the melodious, triumphant sadness of Schubert. Periodically, he gave recitals at Carnegie Hall—well attended by friends from the City and suburbs—businessmen, lawyers and their wives. Well attended and free. The law was his living; music his life.

"So why don't you quit?" Sumner asked. "You wouldn't need that many clients. You'd keep your overhead low. I'd send you some from my practice."

"If I'd only done it earlier," Martin said wistfully. "I'll be fifty next month."

"Balls!" exclaimed Sumner. "You don't look a day over thirty-seven. You're as old as you feel. I'm fifty-one, and I feel like thirty-five."

"Then why don't *you* take a real shot at becoming a concert pianist?"

"I'm afraid I'm not good enough," Sumner said.

"Isn't a lot of that P.R.?" Martin asked. "Why don't you get yourself some P.R. and start charging for your recitals and invite some critics?"

"I'd have to enlarge my repertoire," Sumner said.

"So enlarge it."

"Hiring P.R. might not be a bad idea," Sumner said. "Lawyer turns pianist. The Louis Auchincloss of music. I suppose there could be some interest in that. If I'm good enough."

"You're good enough," Martin said.

"Well, what about you? What about going out on your own?" Sumner asked.

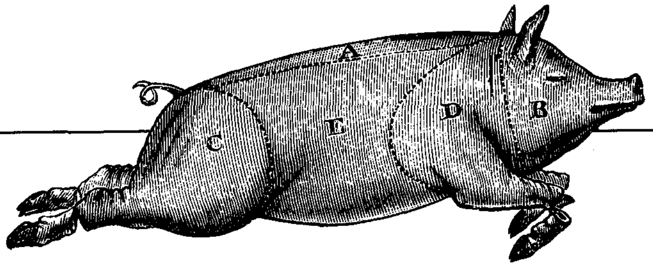
"Maybe I will," Martin said. "Maybe I will. I'm pretty old to make the move. But maybe I will."

"You're as old as you feel," Sumner said.

In the cool, gray dusk, he walked up Madison to his apartment. The chill wind was a harbinger of November. In November, he would be fifty. The lights of the City seemed like personal expressions of hospitality, illuminating the filaments of his soul. How could he be fifty and feel thirty-five? It took all of those years to emcompass looking under his bed at night, blowing soap bubbles, color war at camp—the feel of the bat in his hands, staring out the window in Mr. Lamorey's French class, the fragrance of Eileen and the hard lips of Helen, the church bells on the campus, the stupid grin of Marine sergeant Kowalski, the drives with Francine to the shore, Mr. Gravely's promise of an elastic future, singing "Lili Marlene" to Joanie as he fed her the bottle, placing David's fingers correctly on the baseball, undressing Sylvia in a drab room in the Roosevelt Hotel, sand between his toes at the Hamptons and the feel of skis on fresh powder in Vermont. And all those lives he had touched. All the stories. All the lunches. How could he feel thirty-five after almost fifty years of love and pain?

He reflected on Sumner. Why do people hold back from the natural flow of their desires and abilities, settling for a frustrating security? Why did he? What was the sense of urging others to seize the wave while he stultified near the shore? It would not be easy to leave Francine. And perhaps they could work things out. Certainly, the torpor of their marriage was partly his fault. Gravely, Higgins, however, was another matter. He *could* establish his own practice, and he had adequate resources to draw on during a transition period. It was time—no, overdue—to make his move. What was the point of listening to his friends without learning about himself? He would rent space and hire a secretary. A month at most was all it would take. He looked forward to informing old man Gravely. Maybe there would be an increased offer, but he wouldn't bite. There was a time to talk and a time to act. A month at the most.

It was cold. He was practically the only person without an overcoat. Attractive people moved purposefully in all directions. He felt as one with them. How he loved New York! He quickened his stride, overtaking a man, a woman, two couples. The wind whipped his cheeks and eyes. He breathed deeply from his diaphragm, and ran to cross streets before the light changed. He was conscious of the boyish disarray of his brown hair, that had barely a touch of gray. □



LISSA McLAUGHLIN

IN HOCK

This particular woman, Sally, decided to drive off the road and buy a pig. There was the sign PIGS in crooked letters on the Maine roadside shoulder. She had a hankering for a pig, to be her lover hadn't occurred to her yet, on the way up the walk she thought it would make a funny story, how the pig turned up at the tail end of her vacation. She went up the walk to the pig store, a farm actually, where farmers were handling the pigs' hind quarters with sticks, poking at high flesh lizarded with mean hair, listening hard to all the whining and coughing like doctors overseeing their patients, the same anxious strokings of hooves Sally now saw inside the pen the farmers bid across. A business woman herself, she was impressed, awed, and held her briefcase up against her stomach. A sow dotted with piglets gave her a shot look out of the corner of her eye, lying there squashed under her size, breathing. Sally didn't know the difference between a dream and all this and felt something rise inside her. Hello there! she called to the mother, with the little gimlets of the piglet boys and girls gnawing into her side. Sally felt hungry, and this made her dizzy. The pigs' smell impeded the air. Give me that one, she said, I'll treat it just like a little dog. The farmer had a beard. You will, will you? he said. Don't you know that's a pig? Confound you, don't you take no action against my pig when you find out he ain't no dog, you hear? His Maine accent somehow made him blend in with the shrill distinctiveness of his property. I won't, said Sally dreamily, I'll be responsible, and pushing her arm up against the car window and the farmer aside, she let the piglet swing back and forth in her grasp with short hops and little strainings, like a tiny half moon trying to break free. All Sally could see was the top of his head. Then he swung his face sideways and nosed her hard in the breast, Sally stood still, her car key in her hand. Don't worry, she said, We're going right home. And she kept her eyes on him.

They drove along the big Maine pines. That's where I got him, Maine, she'd tell people. Isn't he a sight? From Maine you came, and to Connecticut you shall go, she sang. She didn't know yet what she'd do with a pig. Would you like to listen to the radio? With one finger she scratched his back. She knew she'd hold his face out to his guests, too happy and heedless to look at him. The pig's eyes glanced intensely sideways. They were like little sewn-on blue beads. He arched his back and butted the seat. Then he came swarming into her side. Be quiet there! she cried, honking the horn by accident. The pig wobbled away as if drunkenly reconsidering, then slid down and fell asleep. Sally held tightly to the wheel.

Sally was a small, strong-bodied, full-willed woman used to dealing in images. She was in advertising. She could make anything look good. But this cast no reflection on her own personal ability to discern. I am a hard woman with good eyes, she used to say. This is what points me, she said, striking herself in the forehead. Let's drink to that, Boys! The startled ad men in a row would rise with their glasses. They believed her, the way she flopped down on a sofa during meetings, or pushed her hand over desk tops until the wood seemed to stand up under her fingers, grow shiny from her persuasiveness. You just have to be suspicious, Sally laughed, striding along beside the men with her jacket lapels wallowing in the breeze. In fact, Sally's lack of faith meant the man could have fun with her. She distrusted everything, so she always loved a con. You're too much, she'd beam, when someone put a fake sign up saying the john was out of order, or got an ad man to run off to lunch with a nonexistent account.

Now Sally hesitated to put her hand down on her own car seat. But she wanted to very much. One of her dark eyes gave her a shocked look in the mirror. What's gotten into you? it said. The other darted down at the little form curled against the seat. She could pick the piglet up and sit him in one palm. But look how he breathed, what a monster face he had. She wanted to get right down there and look at it. She wanted to lie down beside him on the seat. The pig snoozed. He had more skull than most people, pointing resolutely, yet plaintively toward the dashboard. Imagining the blood beating there made her even more giddy. She thought of lifting him under the narrow chest, showing him the weather. But when she reached out, she felt scared to touch him. She pulled her purse closer to her. She felt guilty he couldn't see out. Her palm floated in middair, scratchy. She had no idea yet about her intentions, but instead played the wheel just like any responsible woman, fixing her eyes on the asphalt road, hazed with the dust of Maine heat. She only knew, sitting there, that the sound of his hooves on the seat rattled her. After a long time he woke up. She was still wondering, was he wanting to find his mother, was he embarrassed? She thought and thought. Or worse, was he indifferent? Then she almost lost the wheel, Oh it's you! He'd plunged his head into her side then run blindly against the far door. She sat back up very straight. Then he turned and rocking forward ran right against her again. The whole car almost tipped over. Sally was shouting and laughing, and the car drove in and out of its lane.

Finally they crossed the Connecticut border. Sally was still introducing herself. I know it must be funny to you, she was saying to the piglet's hard, dusty skull, Here I am Executive Director of this enormous ad agency, used to dealing people in and out like cards, I drive up in my little Honda and steal you away inside. Do you miss your mother already? she asked hurriedly. Can you forgive me? Let me wipe your face. She kept quickly talking as if afraid to hear what she was saying. Sally lifted her own dark, handsome looks and jangling earrings, overcome with the sensation of search that was applying itself to her palm. The pig stood backed against the seat as if waiting for his mother, his flexible snout like a wall of fluid skin ramming itself again and again between her fingers, while she held desperately on, seeing the road signs open and shut. What happened to your smell? he seemed to cry, and his head shoved against her loud with consideration and loneliness. All of a sudden Sally's hand gripped his snout tightly while he squealed brilliantly, his face threading itself out of her fingers. Look at me! Sally shouted, taking her eyes off the road. Do you hear me at all? The felt-covered head collapsed as she let loose. Then they were in the driveway, the pig knew, and while she tried to feel for him again, applying her brakes, he let out a shriek and rolled sideways against the door.

He was still grunting weakly, and Sally looked up for reassurance at her white house with the evergreens pruned into submission, in the shape of cashboxes. The lawn boy had left the mower out, and it stood like a security device or a pet by the driveway, its handle at the level of her eyes. You short little punkin, Sally said, looking straight forward, surprising herself with these baby syllables. She heard his complaining and worrying and couldn't stand it anymore. Look, she said, hefting him under the belly straight up into the air. This is the kind of animal Connecticut has, she laughed, parading him gently back and forth so he could see the mower and lowering her face toward him trying to smile, but he thrashed and suffered so high up and his mouth broke open into screams so intense she cried, Then tell me what you want! and turned him abruptly against her shirt, and he rooted there while her own eyes rolled in comparable quantities of despair. Then she opened the door and put her legs out of the car.

The pig glanced around the kitchen as Sally stood drinking a martini. The olive danced and quivered and she thought of the various dances the piglet seemed to do, all the time looking through his thick lashes, his pale eyes, and of her own lap as he stood rocking over his little legs. Confused images of pines, flesh and asphalt came into her head. She saw her own face in the mirror, sticking out her tongue. She shut her eyes, Then she pushed her hand against her silk shirt, remembering something. I have a date tonight! and with Sam! Oh boy! and she put her head against her arm, and grabbed her hair, perplexed. And just when he's been telling me these nice things. Poor joker. She jumped away from the pig, who was sniffling her foot. Stop that, she said, taking a jump. The pig moved blindly forward. I want you to come along with me now, Sally said, desperately clutching her drink. The pig was following her foot everywhere. I want you to come while I take my bath. Come on and you can play with the towels. She looked behind her all the way up the carpeted stairs afraid the pig wouldn't listen. But he came into the bathroom and was scratching a flea when she dropped her robe, and at the sight of her he squealed and ran frantically back and forth over the tiles. It's all right, it's all right, Sally cried, clutching her throat and splashing water every which way, her free hand flying over his back. It's just me, it's just me, I'm just sitting in some water! Used to the sound of her voice by now, the pig gradually ran in smaller circles. He banged into her hand to calm himself and his eye skipped with a separate existence between her fingers, and Sally felt her own flesh rise.

She was soaped and rinsed. She stood up tentatively, grabbing the towel rack. The pig came up. She was clutching the towel to her legs, and he put his snout against her knee, scoured it in slow revolving circles so complete her skin answered and a more general haze than steam rose in front of her, and she saw herself fallen back on the bed and the pig came nearer, grown bigger. Her mouth opened in the fragrant air and soap slid down her nose. Then her eyes focused on the unbelievably fragile fold of creased skin along his neck. She was staring down at the top of a baby. Albeit precocious, his flat, gripping nose was a baby's nose. You're a baby! she cried. A baby! And look what you're making me do! And she felt the nose plunge and search for what it could feed on, grant itself a name by, and her arm flogged the air in horror. You're a baby! she screeched, flogging her arm at the ideas that spilled into the air like steam.

She ran across the white carpet and into her bedroom. Her bed was shaped like a circle and she fell on top of it. The piglet threw back his head and screeched Me! Me! Me! while he ran round and round in circles and she retracted her feet. Finally she could not stand it any longer and hauled him into her arms while he sucked air and dragged her fingers into his hungry mouth uttering little barks of gratitude. He pushed her and then pulled her with his feet and his gracious, clothlike nose. She fell somewhere a long time and then came back to where she was. She looked down at the hoof marks on her chest. You come here and do this to me, she stared down plaintively. What is all this for? she mourned into his wet hair. The little pig had his eyes closed.

Late that evening Sally got ready to go on her date.

She had all kinds of fancy clothes, labels from everywhere. She pulled out a dress from her closet. She locked the bedroom door and found a dish and put milk in it and unlocked the door and left it inside. Between dressing and calling the ad man in question she managed to find some straw in a neighbor's paddock, and filling the Smirnoff's box she'd dragged up from the cellar, took a long look in her mirror then fit his heaving feet inside the carton. She lifted her hand, holding his smell from her dress. His feet swung unbelievingly, back and forth.

Listen, she said, and her heart was folding and tearing. Her pearls swung out in the air. The pig's skull was very narrow and tipped, and a tiny pointed eye glinted from one side. He stood sideways below her, looking off. Sally swayed on her high heels and then fell forward and the pig shoved his dense, sharpened brow quickly against hers, and trembled there. He was drinking his milk, staggering. Listen, Sally began again, panting. I won't be long, it's only an evening. I won't stay there with him. I promise I'll be here tonight. The piglet stumbled and fell forward in the box and Sally caught her lip. She was crying. I'm sorry. Forgive me for forgetting you. Her tears fell on the pig's head. Oh, forgive me. I lead such a difficult life. □

MICHAEL GUDE

OUR VISCERA KILL US

Our viscera kill us
never exactly as we imagine
they might, quietly
in our sleep, or after sex,
or easily.

I imagine my liver
blue-black and bloody,
not the color of a fish
too long out of water.
They say

that shortly after death
a dead man's heart loses
its color, becomes a broken toy
that once whistled.
They say

the day is a narrow nave
even your bones cannot endure
(I hope to find my way
through the dak-dak-dak drip
of eternity).

Those who've been
brought back by electricity,
or drugs, or the hard labor
of a passing good samaritan
claim their souls

went sailing off (like my father's
shed went sailing off
in the first strong wind!).
One formerly dead individual
went so far

as to claim his soul floated
above his body where nobody
ever cleaned. He saw a key
on a door ledge, claimed it as proof
of eternity.

But I, with a tug in my guts,
will know when dead is dead.
I'll cash in those few chips
pocketed for just that moment,
I'll weep,

I'll not rise reborn
from a park bench. I'll see my life
taking off like a rabbit
through a briar entangled at the base
of the brain.

Forced to focus on noses
I've never loved, I'll understand perfectly.
I'll understand the raised eyebrows
in the mixed company
as meaning

something indiscreetly said on my part.
But death is nasty
and indiscreet, always wiping
his snot on his sleeve
and pointing.

BABY MONTILLA

ROUSSIE FLORA WOODRUFF

"Very nice dress," Trining Gatchalian said to Baby Montilla, as she passed through the front doors of Elegant Garden. "Where'd you get it?"

"My aunt made it for me last time I was home in P.I.," Baby said, spreading out her skirts. The deep red rayon was shot with gold threads, and she shimmered when she moved.

"Beautiful. Maybe Dougie Clay will fall madly in love with you tonight," Trining said, "and carry you home to England with him."

Baby giggled. Though she did not know Dougie Clay, she, like all her friends, considered being carried off the most desirable event she could imagine. How else could they stop being rich women's maids? Her friend Liklik married an American soldier and was carried off to Phoenix, Arizona; now she sent Baby inflaming letters about married love and the entertainments of America. Baby re-read all the letters every night before she went to sleep.

"Did you have any trouble getting off tonight?" Trining asked.

"No," Baby said, "so far they are very nice to me."

"I told you Americans and Australians are the best to work for. If only Mr. Richardson were a bachelor, then you would have the perfect job, like me. Antony lets me run everything, and he's never home."

Baby was still shocked that Trining's employer encouraged her to use his first name, but then Trining led an incredibly glamorous life for a Filipina maid in Hong Kong. She was invited to a lot of fancy parties like the one they were going to tonight. Crown counsels were going to be there, Trining had said. Baby was sure crown counsels must be British royalty, but, in her hard little voice, Trining had answered no, they were only men. Baby thought Trining was so beautiful, so wise and so sophisticated, and she felt honored to have been chosen as Trining's best friend.

They linked arms and strolled slowly through the cool evening. Conduit Road was narrow, and the sidewalks often ended abruptly at a sharp curve, leaving the poor pedestrian, who could not see what was coming around the bend, stranded on a curb too small for feet. Baby and Trining walked Conduit Road every day on their way to the market, the dry cleaner's, or to air their employers' dogs, so they zig-zagged at the right times. At breaks between the high rises, they could see all of Hong Kong harbor glittering beneath them. Baby had read it described as a jewel box on the back of one of the postcards she sent to her mother ("A view from the Peak: Hong Kong by night is a queen's jewel box of coloured lights"), and the words had thrilled her. "A queen's jewel box," she would whisper to herself on the nights her employers were out, and she could stand at the front windows for hours. It was better than television.

"What are they like, the Richardsons?" Trining asked.

"They are so in love with each other," Baby said. "And Mr. Richardson calls her sugar all the time. Shuggah, he says it."

"Yes, but what is *she* like?" Trining asked. "She is the one who will give you trouble."

"No, no trouble," Baby said. "I think she never had a maid before."

"Don't you be too good and spoil her, Baby, or she will expect you to be perfect forever and ever."

"Anyway, this job is much better than those British," Baby said. "No more crazy kids, no more fighting. I am not so nervous all the time."

"Ooh, Baby," Trining said, giving her a hug, "I am so glad you are with me tonight. You are like my sister, and she and I are *that* close." Baby knew Trining was holding up two tightly pressed fingers in the dark.

"Yes," she said, just as pleased. "Here, isn't this it?" She stopped before a brass plaque that read *Skyline Mansion*.

"Yes, yes. How do I look?" Trining asked, tossing her stylishly shaggy hair and smoothing her skirt.

"Gorgeous," Baby said, and giggled. "How do I look?"

"Beautiful," Trining answered, and, giggling, they climbed the stone walk to the lobby, two pretty women on their way to a party.

The host's flat was high up on the twelfth floor, and they began to hear music as the elevator rose past the sixth. "Would a little more love make it right?" Trining sang with the music. "It would, wouldn't it, Baby? It would." The elevator doors opened to a roar of sound and smoke, and the two women pushed their way past a half-dozen curious Chinese children and on toward the party.

"Look, Gray, look what we have here," they heard a joking British voice say. "It's the sexiest woman in Hong Kong, and here, from the looks of her, this one's the smartest." Baby felt a thin hand pat her head.

They turned to see two pink faces dipping down at them. "Hello, sailor," Trining said, deepening her voice and dropping her lids slightly.

"Bravo," the joking man applauded. "We'll be able to send you out on the streets of Wanchai any day now." Everyone laughed, and Baby did too, though she did not understand the joke.

"Hello, little one," the joking man's friend said to Baby, "where have you been all my life?"

"I don't know," Baby said seriously in her heavily accented English. "I just met you."

"And now that you've found me we'll live happily ever after," the friend said, smothering her in a sweaty hug. "Tell me you love me," he urged, in a loud stage whisper.

"Come on," Trining said, pulling on Baby's arm. "Let's go get a drink. Hey sailor," she said to the joking man in her sultry voice, "I'll see you later."

The flat was oddly laid out—T-shaped with a long, narrow living room and a short cross-bar of a dining room. The bar was in the dining room, or at least an array of liquor bottles and plastic glasses was spread across the top of the dining table. All the furniture, such as it was, had been pushed back against the walls, leaving a large scuffed-up section of parquet that everyone avoided. Baby, who had quickly become accustomed to the Richardsons' brand new Chinese rosewood furniture and their tufted leather couches, was offended by the motley pieces lining the wall. And the wood floor here was appalling, all scratched and worn. She spent hours waxing and shining the Richardsons' floors. Every morning she skated around the flat on two old towels, buffing the parquet to a high gleam. She wondered who took care of this bachelor's flat. A Chinese amah probably, and everyone said Chinese amahs were good cooks and terrible cleaners.

As they made their way through the darkened living room, they heard girlish voices calling to them in Tagalog. "Hey, Trining, bring your friend and come sit with us."

"In a minute," Trining answered. "We need something to drink."

The dining room was packed with men, only men. To Baby they all looked to be tall and pink-cheeked, with hair that dipped and feathered over their ears; and they all wore business suits, as if at 9:00 in the evening they had come directly from their offices. Baby and Trining wedged their way to the table and poured out two Cokes.

"Are these crown counsels?" Baby asked in hushed tones. The word crown made her think of Hong Kong's being a queen's jewel box.

"Yes," Trining whispered. "They are all lawyers and all very important."

"Hello, Trinny," a pudgy, sandy-haired man said. "How are you tonight?" Baby thought he looked nice, even if he was pudgy. He looked like a gentleman.

"Hey, Donaldo," Trining said. "You're looking good." She stroked his tie. "Yeah, looking good in your Gucci tie."

"You're looking well yourself," Donald said. "And so is your friend here."

"This is Baby Montilla," Trining said. "Baby, this is Donald . . . Donald what? Donald Duck?"

"It's Donald Fuck, actually," he said.

Baby was shocked, but Trining laughed and so she did too.

"Peter, Peter," Donald said to a stringy man in a dark suit pushing past them, "did you hear my new name? Donald Fuck."

"Good ring to it," the stringy man said. ". . . and representing her majesty, Mr. Donald Fuck." He smiled as he continued past, and Baby could see his two front teeth were long and wide, like her father's mule. She forgot to join in the laughter.

"Baby, do you see what you've started?" Donald asked. "If it weren't for you, I'd still be simple old Donald Bailey."

Baby did not know what he was talking about. Trining did not even smile, so Baby did not know what to do. She sipped her Coke.

"Will you excuse us, Donald," Trining said. "We want to see some of our friends in the other room."

"I say, Richard," Donald called down the table, "did you hear my new name?"

"I believe the whole block has heard it," a tired voice called back to him.

"I don't like the way he talks," Baby said, as they walked towards their friends.

"Ignore him," Trining said. "We're just here to have a good time. Ooh, Nita, look at that tan. When did you get back from holiday?" Trining embraced a small dark woman with shining eyes and shining lips painted the color of bougainvillea.

"Two days ago," Nita said. "And Ben says to say hello." Ben was Trining's sweetheart in the Philippines. They would have married years ago if either one of them could have found a job.

"I heard he is engaged to someone from Manila," Trining said.

"No, no, he said to tell you he still loves you," Nita said.

"They all say that," Trining said. "He would marry me and then send me back to Hong Kong so I could support him. Filipino men, they're all the same. Sleep all day while *mama* earns the money."

"You're terrible," Nita said, and giggled.

"This is my friend Baby Montilla," Trining said. "She just moved from Sai Kung to Number Eleven Conduit."

"Good for you," Nita said. "Who are you working for?"

"Mr. and Mrs. Ted Richardson," Baby said, as if she were announcing royalty. "They are American."

"You're lucky," Nita said. "You remember Amparo, don't you, Trining? From Mindanao? Her new employer backed out of the contract while she was on holiday in P.I. Only way she could return to Hong Kong was through an agency. Now she's working for a Chinese family in Kowloon. If she's not home on time, they chain-lock the door so she has to sleep on the back stairs. They've got two dogs, three kids, and a ninety-year-old grandmother, all in the same flat. Ooh, it's terrible."

They all exclaimed over Amparo's long fall from fortune. "No way I'd work for Chinese," Trining said. "And no way I would go to an agency."

"What would be better?" Nita asked. "To be stuck in P.I. with no job and your family all crying for money, or to come back to Hong Kong to work for Chinese?"

Baby shuddered at the choice. Things were so good now, so unbelievably good, that she did not want to think of such misfortune. All she needed to make life perfect was a boyfriend, maybe one of those sweet, blue-eyed American sailors who walked around the Peak on Sundays and who held doors for her and called her ma'am.

"Baby, come here," Trining called. "Come meet Cela, from your province." And Baby moved down the line of pretty, chattering Filipina maids to join Trining.

"Oyez, oyez, oyez!" A voice cracked like a whip through the gossiping in the living room. A red-faced man stood on the dining table, his shoulders hunched to avoid bumping the plastic chandelier.

"I think you know why we're all here tonight," he said. "Our own Dougie Clay is going home next week after a thousand and one nights in Hong Kong. And what nights those were, eh, Dougie? I don't know about the rest of you chaps, but Dougie and I have been through the wars together, to hell and back, you might say. Still, we all know he's doing the right thing, don't we? He's going home to his Dad's private practice. Bugger the Chinese, right Dougie? You can't right the Wongs. Shall I tell you why Dougie Clay will be missed?"

"No," the men in the dining room all shouted.

"Well, fuck off then," the red-faced man said. "Goodbye, Dougie. You know who your bloody friends are. Here's to Dougie Clay," he shouted, and raised his glass.

"To Dougie," everyone shouted, including the women in the living room.

"Speech," someone called.

"Speech," the men in the dining room chorused.

An angel-faced man with graying hair was pushed up on the table. Baby thought he was very handsome in his blue blazer, his crisp shirt, and his red-and-blue striped tie. Ah, it was the man at the door, the joking man, the one Trining had called "sailor." Someone looked after him well, she thought, and some poor Filipina would soon be out of a plum job.

She whispered to Trining, "Who works for him?"

Trining shook her head and frowned. Her lips were sucked in as if she had a mouth full of pins.

"I don't believe I need to tell you," Dougie Clay was saying from the dining table, "how much I'll miss all of you. It's not often one has the opportunity to enjoy one's work as much as I have, and I'm afraid I'll find England a bit dreary after Hong Kong."

How calm and smooth he is, Baby thought, and *cold.* She could not imagine being carried off by Dougie Clay, as Trining had teased, nor could she imagine he would he interested in a small, dark Filipina. He looked as if he would prefer the tall, airy blonds who dressed all in beige and carried purses the size of airmail envelopes over their shoulders. Baby saw them on the streets of Central, gliding out of designer boutiques, or standing at the perfume counters in Lane Crawford.

"I hope," Dougie Clay was saying, "there will be one of you clumsy fools able to take my place on the squash team. This has been our best year, and I would like to think next year might be even better."

No, Baby thought, if someone were to carry her off, she would want him to be rough and jolly and have a red moustache like the Australian sailor who spoke to her last Sunday on the Star Ferry. She wanted a great, huge, muscular man who could pick her up, squeeze her tight, and swing her around like a child. These men looked as if they had not even the strength to squeeze her hand.

A drunken cheer went up from the dining room, and Dougie Clay jumped lightly from the table. The music was turned on again by some mysterious hand, and the crowd of men in the dining room began to lurch by twos into the living room. Someone—was his name Donald? Gray? These tall Britishers with their pink skin and wavy hair all looked too much alike—asked her to dance. Trining had disappeared, and so she stepped onto the scuffed parquet with him.

Twenty minutes later, as she was growing tired of dancing with her stiff-hipped, gangle-armed partner who kept joyfully bumping and elbowing his friends, she heard Trining say loudly in her ear, "Come, Baby, we must go home." She began pulling Baby off the floor.

"Hey, Trining," Baby's partner called, "don't feel bad. Since Dougie's leaving, I'll take you on. Nothing wrong with Dougie Clay's leftovers, I'll say. Hey, I'll take you both on."

Baby could not make sense of her partner's remarks. She saw him fall to his knees, his hands clasped tightly together, the word "please" on his lips; but Trining was pulling her so forcefully she could not even think. At the elevator, she saw that Trining was crying. Her cheeks were wet, and there were damp splotches on her dress.

"He won't take me," Trining said, and Baby did not know what to say in answer. She stared at the stains on the elevator floor, and felt stupid.

Then they were on the street, and Trining was cursing. "The bastard won't take me," she kept saying. "He promised he would. He said he'd marry me, and take me to England."

"You never told me," Baby said, aghast that her best friend could have kept secret such a momentous piece of news. She thought they told each other everything.

"Are you dumb?" Trining fairly shrieked. "Are you so *dumb?* Nobody tells until it's a sure thing." She strode off down the street, stepping as fast as her narrow skirt and high-heeled shoes would allow.

"No, I'm not so dumb," Baby called after her. "At least not so dumb as to think a crown counsel would take me anywhere but to bed." Shocked at herself for speaking such harsh words to her beloved Trining, Baby began to cry. Who would be her best friend if Trining left? Who would tell her how to cook spaghetti, and what to say to those monsters at the Labour Department? Who would stay over on Saturday night, and curl up with her in bed like a sister, and soothe away the homesickness?

Baby said a small prayer, a grateful one. Thank God that English bastard would not take her best friend away.

Ahead of her, Trining had come to the end of the sidewalk, and Baby saw her pause and look down at her feet, as if stunned that she had allowed such a thing to happen. Baby thumbed away her tears, and, eager to comfort, ran quickly down the dark street, calling softly to her friend. □

ELIZABETH LIBBEY

A SUDDEN TURN OF WEATHER

for William MacLeish

To think the skin just below the neck
rushes into color, and the eyes
clear in a moment. Northwest wind
rattles the shutters, storm door bangs,
the crack in the glass must widen.
Four poster creaks and seems
to widen. He is above her, concentrating
on her eyes; she imagines her great-grandparents
together like this, imagines she's turning
to water. His stomach slides
against hers, on the windows ice crystals
deepen, she can see
his breath shooting out against hers.

West wind, hard rain, last night's
radio said, said *temperature dropping.*
Out on the bay the trawler Knorr
dips her bow and shivers toward stern,
ice beginning to sock her in.
The captain, he'll try to go out anyway
come afternoon. "Weather," he'll say,
"hell, a bit of weather."

She lies full length underneath
the blue quilt, in the one spot of sheet
they've made warm. He's in
the bathroom, drawing the bath,
humming "Wheel of Fortune, she goes 'round,"
the old floor creaks as he steps in time.
Radio says, 25 below by noon.

In the little bay, waves rush
against themselves, all oily thick, the boats,
they'll go out anyway, he'll
go with them wearing his bright orange
survival suit, "If you get dumped
into the drink, you could still
come out o.k."

She imagines her eyes draining away,
no light gets through, she
is dark water surrounding him. Soon he'll go down
to latch the banging storm door, his
broad shoulders disappearing down the curve
of the stair,
"I swear, I still swear
we do not love each other hard enough,
do not let go hard enough,"
is he standing laughing beside her saying, "You've
been talking in your sleep again," the smell
of onions close, his hands
on her face, he's been cutting onions
down in the kitchen. "Omelets," he whispers,
"omelets and fishes and lemon tea," his hand slides
along her thigh.

Or is he already gone, not wanting
to wake her, storm door still banging, "leave it,
the glass is broken out anyway," his bright
orange back disappearing when she could not see.

WITH EVELYN

MARY PETERSON

Evelyn, lose weight! I'm thinking. But, because she is not *my* ten-year-old daughter, I don't say it and only keep combing her wet brown hair all of a piece down her glistening back, while she faces the mirror and stands still as a mushroom, expressionless. My big breasts keep brushing her shoulders and she doesn't notice, or doesn't acknowledge them anyhow. They are probably uninteresting to her, my childless breasts, oversized, sometimes an embarrassment to me and sometimes the amplest of offerings, but I am not overweight at all; I've only these cow-breasts that swing down under the baggy sweatshirt, cotton rubbing my nipples. *Anything more than a handful,* the boys used to say, *is too much.* And laughed. And pointed. But *Evelyn! You have handfuls around your young waist, blanketing over your hips, and more handfuls bunching over your thighs, and your shoulders are round with fat and your upper arms jiggle so: at ten years old!* And maybe the boys are talking. I don't want you to think *that* should matter, dear Evelyn. Not boys. Not yet. Anyway. What matters is your fat passivity, your uncommitted eyes, the way you always say, "Yes, please," and "No, thank you," as if you were visiting strangers every weekend. *These things count, Evelyn.* Though you don't listen, and pull your towel tighter.

I hear rain starting on the skylight. It's only nine a.m., but already I've made breakfast eggs and tidied up downstairs and seen that the water was right for Evelyn's shower, sent Andrew (her father) off with Dennis (her brother) to bring in more wood for the stove, set the whole works going. They looked at me with a devilish mixture of resentment and relief, and went. "Evelyn," I said, "you're going to get cleaned up."

"Yes, thank you," she said.

I grab the spray bottle of No More Tangles, and give her hair a squirt. Then I go at it with the big plastic comb, jerking away. Her head snaps back, regains posture. Her expression doesn't change.

"Does this hurt, Evelyn?"

"No. It's fine."

Am I a sadist? I try to be more gentle, start the tangles from the bottom and work my way up slowly, unraveling the problem hair by hair. She seems to smile. Perhaps now I am doing it right, now I am behaving properly. Or it is only the ghost of a smile in the foggy bathroom mirror, just a distortion, breath on the glass. As for me, the tension starts in the soles of my feet (where it usually does) and works up the calves; then my legs are rigid. I try to stop it there, flexing my knees, bouncing up and down a little, and my breasts swing under the sweatshirt. She doesn't ask me what I'm doing. It happens every time she visits anyway, and she must be used to it now—the shower, the complaints of dandruff, the thick hair all stuck together oily and neglected, the bouncing stepmother. If I had a daughter of my own, she would have big breasts and thin, easy hair. She would take showers without being asked. And she would learn to comb her hair alone at an early age, to be self-reliant. I would teach her, among her first words, the lines from the 1855 *Canadian Settlers' Guide:* "In cases of emergency, it is folly to fold one's hands and sit down to bewail in abject terror. It is better to be up and doing." Not because we are Canadian, which we aren't. Because they are good life advice.

Evelyn's hair is a case of emergency, this very minute. It combs down smoothly now and has many lengths—two or three inches longer in some places than in others.

"Did your mother cut your hair last?"

I have uttered the taboo word: Mother. There is an important silence. Then she says in a grave voice, "Yes."

I sigh. "Well, she must have been in a little hurry when she did it."

"Maybe."

"Because it's all different lengths, Evelyn."

Silence. The potent silence of meditation. The bathroom resonates.

"I guess," she says finally.

I take a deep breath. "She must have been in a *great* hurry, dear, and I would like to do something. I want to use my scissors to even out your hair. Evelyn, I would like to trim it. I will not cut it shorter, but only straighten it out. What do you think of that?"

"All right," she says flatly.

"I want to ask you a favor, then," I say, pressing on. "Don't mention this to your mother. She may not like it." *This is an awful risk,* I think. *I'm asking for complicity.* Is *that* what I want? I comb the hair down and wait for a signal from Evelyn. What was it she said about her mother, yesterday? That Mother was staying home this weekend to watch the neighbor's dogs. *Guilt,* I thought. *She guilts this child.* And then I realize I don't even know what Evelyn's mother feeds the children, much less about dogs. That I'm doing more than taking risks: I'm violating. This little girl will choke on it. The tension has reached my lower back now, and it aches. *Now Evelyn should say No!,* I'm thinking. *No! I want my hair the way Mummy cut it.*

She inclines her head to look at me from behind a curtain of wet hair. I can't read a thing in her expression. "Okay," says Evelyn.

Scissors in hand, I begin to cut. *Evelyn!* I'm thinking. *I'm about to cut your lovely thick hair all the way up to your eyeballs, and you will never look the same way again. How do you like that?*

The evil stepmother raises the gleaming shears for an ordinary chop. The little girl is silent and patient, gazing into the foggy mirror.

Last night I woke at four a.m. worrying about this child. I put my hand on Andrew's damp sleeping back and looked at the shaggy dark pines through the window. He was snoring gently. His sleep begins with violent noises early, and fades to pianissimo as dawn approaches. Six years married, I could tell the time of night by his sounds. We have found Evelyn a friend here in town, and Judy was over to play earlier that evening. They had a game called "Trouble" with dice that roll by popping a plastic dome in the board's center, and they reached and popped the dome and moved their little red and yellow markers around, and never said a word to each other. They didn't laugh, or giggle, or tell secrets. They popped their bubble with a gravity scarcely equalled, and it seemed that if I took the game away they would still be leaning into neutral space for something to touch. So I went into the guest room to play the piano. After a half hour, when I was rendering "In The Still of the Night" with teary sentimentality, Evelyn came in and sat on the couch. *The music has reached her,* I thought. I realized that I hadn't heard the popping plastic for a good ten minutes. I revved up. I ended the piece with a great flourish of chords, and hit the final note with a fine attack, and turned to her smiling.

"Judy and I are bored," she said. "Is there something to do?"

We went into the living room and dug out another game. I got them started playing it. I did not go back to the piano. I went into the kitchen instead, and made a fresh pot of coffee and wondered when Andrew would come back with Dennis—they had gone to the market for a few things, and must have run into somebody. Andrew cannot go out without taking an hour or longer to talk. To anybody. Marketing is, for Andrew, a social occasion. Now Evelyn and Judy played "Uno" with vengeance, slapping cards on the table. It was the only sound in the house and I turned on the radio, which was rather like inviting additional guests to a dull party. Judy is a gorgeous child with red hair, and I've seen her with other friends: they're noisy and silly and vivacious and energetic. Once when I entered her living room, Judy and a friend were doing headstands on the rug. Once they were having a salamander race. The problem—if there was a problem, and there *seemed* to be one—was not with Judy. Judy was growing breasts now; they poked forth under her t-shirt like spring crocus. *Perhaps Judy is outgrowing Evelyn,* I wondered.

I lay in the dark that night listening to Andrew's breathing, and worried. I pondered Evelyn's silences. Her sluggishness. The way she came in for lunch with her brother, and sat on the couch in her jacket and hat until after ten minutes I said, "For God's sake, Evelyn, aren't you hot in all those clothes?"

"I guess," she said, and went to take them off.

Four in the morning is The Hour of the Wolf. More people die just before dawn than at any other time of day. There was no humor in my thinking, no relief. I was stark awake looking at the ceiling, then the west window. *The child,* I was thinking, *is a menace. And she is worrying me. And she is not even my child.* And then—because these were true things, and I felt them all the way to my stomach, and because it was four a.m. and I was without daytime defenses—my eyes filled up with tears that ran over and down my temples into my hair, and I just lay there that way, hating and loving Evelyn, until I had to reach for the box of Kleenex on the bedside table and blow my nose, and Andrew stirred and rolled over to wrap around me, one hand over my spilling breast.

It did not stop the crying. I was thinking then of the other thing Evelyn does, which is reach for Andrew. Wherever he is, she finds him, she touches him. On the couch she rubs his shoulders or his feet, she puts her head in his lap. When we returned Judy to her parents, Evelyn

MARTIN McGOVERN

BAPTISM OF SAND

> *. . . it makes no matter whether one is washed in the sea or in a pond, a river or a fountain, a cistern or a tub.* —*Tertullian*

There is no going down to the sea,
here where the prairie moves out and moves out
and *arid* is a thought defending its shape
against bands of mirages drunk in the distance.

And if the prairie should offer me its word,
or I should give my word to it?
My father gave ten years divining it for coal,
his face burned clean to an incredible quiet.

The year I spent the entire spring
refusing to say anything at all,
I listened to the other children chant
Blessed the meek, the poor in spirit.

So at night I lay in that river of silence,
afraid I couldn't speak if I wanted,
that the land I'd inherit was a land so poor
no language would ever break ground on it.

Meadowlark, meadowlark, articulate song.
There are blossoms of speech at the cactus core.
Air strings the earth so tight it will snap:
baptism of sand, baptism of sound.

---

ran along the sidewalk behind Andrew until she'd caught up to put her hand on his back. She went in the door that way; he seemed not to notice.

He never talks of the children when they aren't with us. For him, the children are a long memory of screaming and worry, baby bottles and diapers to change, cat food on the counter and dinner unprepared. But on these visitation weekends, he is capable of turning around and picking Evelyn up and hugging her so fiercely she winces with pleasure. All ninety-six pounds of her. When he does this, his son Dennis pretends to be fascinated by a book, or the birds at the feeder. And I watch, and remind myself that she *is* his daughter. After all.

I hear the door open downstairs now; they are coming with armfuls of damp wood. The rain is only starting. Cold rain, the weather report says, for two days. In two days, Andrew will bring the children back to their mother.

I would like to deliver Evelyn with a note attached, I think now, finishing the trimming of her hair. I pick up the hair dryer and turn it on High, and because it is noisy and prohibitive of conversation we both relax. I lift Evelyn's hair from beneath and feel it falling in wet pieces over my hand. The note, affixed to Evelyn's coat lapel, would say, *Dear Joanne: Your daughter needs more love. Sincerely, Karen.* Andrew and I have a united opinion about Joanne: We can't stand her. But privately I wonder how it must be to raise kids alone, what she must be thinking when she cuts her daughter's hair with a chain saw, who she consults when the bad grades come back from school. Maybe her daughter has enough love.

When I lift my arms over Evelyn's head, I look into the mirror and think, *I should have had children.* At least one child—the breasts seemed to demand it; the heart beating under them wanted it more. I would not have to give my own child back. And sometimes—the best times—she would curl in my lap, and I could bend my head and inhale the sweet warmth of her hair, and she would put one hand against me and fall asleep. I'd have the scent and touch of mothering, as well as events, squalling, disagreements. My child would want to know who I was. But stepmothering is like trying to set up housekeeping on an ice floe: every motion abrades. Evelyn and Dennis never ask where I came from. I married their father when Evelyn was four, and probably it seems to her I have always been around, like the painting in the living room, the pewter pitcher, the brass candlesticks. I am a feature of their lives, but problematic: not friend, not aunt, not mother. They don't know that I had a dog named Trivet, nor that I was a fat child, nor about my own abusive mother who—although she is dead—visits here with me at the oddest times. And they don't know that Andrew and I had a two years' war, and he won: no more children. He has practical notions about children, my Andrew. They cost money; they demand time.

So I stand in my tatty sweatshirt and jeans in this steamy bathroom, lifting fat Evelyn's thick wonderful hair, and it separates like strands of yarn before they are put on a loom, texture without pattern or weave, unfinished. She is the closest thing I have to a daughter, this child with her mother's eyes. The rain comes down harder, and downstairs I can hear Andrew and Dennis laughing.

"Why are they laughing?" Evelyn says.

"What?" I turn off the hair dryer, pick up the comb and attack again.

"Why are they *laugh*ing?"

"Oh, probably they like what they're doing."

"Like us," says fat Evelyn, smiling into the foggy mirror.

Her round cheeks pull up, and her eyes crinkle. In spite of her weight, she has a pretty smile. I find a bad snarl and bury the comb there. *More than a handful is too much, Evelyn*, I think, working away. *It breaks my heart.* ❑

1984:
The Meaning of Porn

In a brutal book, *The Warriors*, the work of a one-time social worker, Mr. Sol Yurick—a book that was later made into a film and managed to revolt with its violence even the young people whom it was designed to please—there is an especially moving scene. It is a beating, a beating performed upon a derelict whom some of the warriors have come upon as they are carrying on their journey from the Bronx back to Coney Island. . . the Ulysses of the book lives in Coney Island. The beating gives the warriors a sexual high, especially one of the chicks among the camp followers. She reaches the point of salubration without any foreplay to her erotic zones. I say the passage is moving. It moves the reader toward sexual excitement. But it is not pornography. Its aim, even as it stimulates sexually, is also to make the reader writhe with disgust that there is an underclass in these United States that gets a bang out of life but only in this fashion, and, what is more, the bang occurs not in the prisons which our society has provided for such employment but right on our streets between the hours of one and four a.m. The scene of the warrriors is, I have said, New York, from Coney Island to a park in the Bronx and back, but the Odyssey could easily begin and end at 16th and Mission in San Francisco or Broad Street in Philadelphia.

It is not pornography. Yurick, however, does use "the language of the whore" in his dialogue. The exclamations of excrement at the beating, bleeding, and blubbering of the dying man—the exclamations that burst from the lips of the warriors and the mindless Athena who accompanies them part of the way on their journey home "derives from the written language of harlots."[1] Although we might well ask what it is that harlots actually write. The answer. . . the most elementary kind of graffiti—not the protests, often eloquent, albeit unsightly, that we find in the restrooms of college campuses but rather the stuff we see scrawled in subways or on the walls of the toilet facilities of Social Security headquarters. Whores, as we know, must unpack their hearts with four letter words and spittle, but when we speak of pornography—the language both from and about the whore (or the ladies, some of them elegant, now possessed of a union card)—it is, is it not, language designed to make the body juices flow, to stimulate one to sexual excitement. Music will do as much, or erotic language or art. But porn pushes us. It pushes toward sex that is tinged, if not saturated, with sadism.

Pornography—the language or the crude cartoon or the film—is the outlet for the man or woman who consciously or unconsciously sees himself as object and who desires passionately to continue being object or to make another human being his object. . . so that the verbs which porn spawns are verbs that strike and demean another human being. . . "bang," "screw," "jam" (as in a lock), "shaft," "stick," "shove," "shtup," "bof," to name a few. . . and the person doing the hit job is, of course, something of a machine. In short, porn is often the language of violence. And in porn, as far as there is an ethic, "might is right."

Orwell, in his classic essay "Raffles and Miss Blandish," worrying about the popularity of English writer James Hadley Chase—the "Faulkner for the masses"—says that Chase "has caught up with what it is now fashionable to call realism, meaning the doctrine that might is right."[2] Orwell finds sadism in this doctrine.

> The interconnection between sadism, masochism, success worship, power worship, nationalism and totalitarianism is a huge subject whose edges have barely been scratched. . . to take merely the first example. . . I believe no one has ever pointed out the sadistic element in Bernard Shaw's work, still less suggested that this probably has some connection with Shaw's admiration for dictators. Fascism is often loosely equated with sadism.[3]

Orwell moves from such observation to what he sees happening in "the characteristic adventure stories of the English-speaking people." These stories are, he insists, moving from "Jack the Giant Killer to Jack the Dwarf Killer." There is, Orwell says, "a considerable literature which teaches overtly or implicitly that one should side with the big man against the little man."[4] Then he observes, "most of what is now written about foreign policy is simply an embroidery on this theme." "What is comparatively new," says Orwell, "is to find the accepted pattern according to which (a) *right is right and wrong is wrong, whoever wins*, and (b) *weakness must be respected*—disappearing from popular literature as well."[5] (italics mine) Orwell says of the book *No Orchids for Miss Blandish*, the book that has him worried, that it is a daydream appropriate to a totalitarian age.[6]

Let us now consider the work Julia (who has no other name) performs at Minitru to see what part pornography plays in *1984*. Julia cranks out pornography on a "novel-writing machine," an idea Disney inspired in Orwell from the way Disney cranked out his cartoons "by. . . essentially a factory process, the work being done partly mechanically and partly by a team of artists who have to subordinate their individual style."[7]

> [Julia] runs and services a powerful but tricky electric motor by which. . . she begins the process of composing a novel. . . from the general directive issued by the Planning Committee to the final touching up by the Rewrite Squad.[8]

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[1] American Heritage, *1976, defines pornography as written, graphic or other forms of communication intended to excite lascivious feelings. The word is derived from writing about prostitutes.* The Shorter O.E.D. *says it is the language of harlots.*

[2] *George Orwell, "Raffles and Miss Blandish," in* Collected Essays, Journals, and Letters, *III, Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1961, p. 222.*

[3] Ibid.

[4] *"Raffles and Miss Blandish," p. 223.*

[5] Ibid.

[6] *"Raffles and Miss Blandish," p. 223*

[7] *George Orwell, "The Prevention of Literature," in* CEJL, *IV, p. 69.*

[8] *George Orwell,* 1984, *New American Library, Signet edition, 1961, p. 108.*

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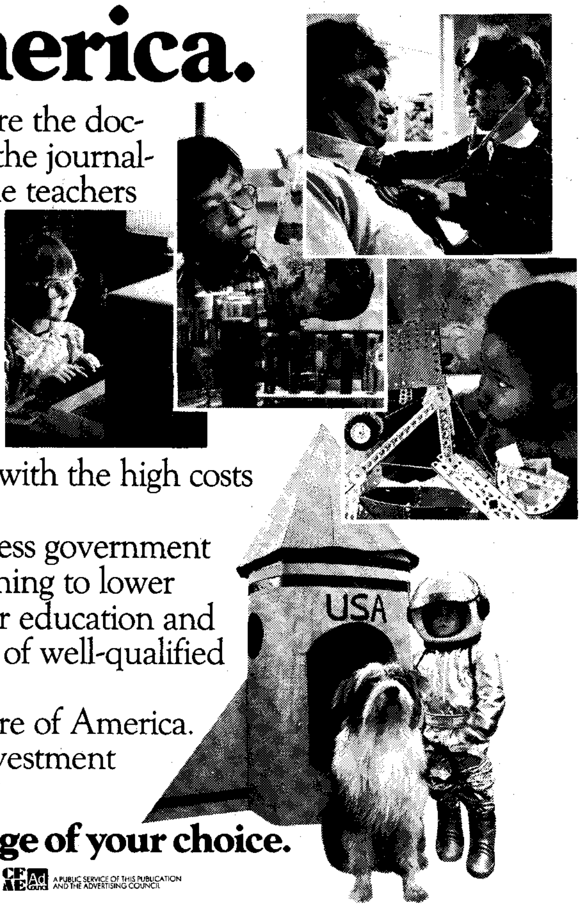

She churns out Pornosec, cheap pornography for distribution among the proles. The booklets come in "sealed packets" and bear such titles as "Spanking Stories," or "One Night in a Girls' School." The proles buy the books furtively under the impression that they are buying illegal stuff.[9] Winston "learns with astonishment" that all the workers in Pornosec are girls because the sex instincts in girls are more controllable than those of men and so girls are not in so much danger "of being corrupted by the filth they handle."[10] But this view of girls is mere illusion. The girls in the Outer Party are either exceptions, like Julia, or else they have lost their sex instincts altogether. Witness Winston's wife, who copulates out of duty.

In *1984* "might has become right" exponentially. Porn keeps the proles happy; power keeps the Inner Party happy. Those in power know its pleasure is in direct proportion to the pain they can inflict on even the mildest of dissidents, although no dissident is really mild in the world and mind of Big Brother. For Big Brother beholds eternity even in a grain of sand. What keeps the Outer Party happy if Julia's porn is for those far less oppressed than Winston and Julia? (We never see a sample of Julia's work, but we presume the stuff she cranks out—judging from the titles of her books—is more naughty than nasty, offering relief to people deprived of their just rations of ersatz chocolate, a kind of pacifier.) There is no porn for Winston and the Outer Party. And yet Winston's group is more abject than the proles. They don't sing or dance. They are cut off from any physical expression except it be enforced calisthenics, two minutes of hate, or copulation for procreation. There is no porn to give them relief of deprivation because the Inner Party has accomplished for *itself* the "sadistic daydream appropriate to totalitarianism" and the language of Newspeak, the language Winston's party is being force fed, is largely the language of violence—the thud, the stick, the blow without relief of orgasm. It is the thud internalized. In effect, the Outer Party is the punching bag to the Inner Party.

"We empty of their humanity those whom we deny speech," says George Steiner in *A Future Literacy*.

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[9] 1984, *pp. 108-109.*

[10] Ibid.

"Break off speech to others and the Medusa turns inward." But in the process of destroying another man's mind one loses his own. . . "when the white man turns tyrant, it is his own freedom he destroys."* So it is Big Brother who has turned himself to stone by making other men dumb, by shoving into men's gullets words empty of any meaning other than the thud.

Winston alone, because he still remembers the past, is capable of outburst—capable of rage. Given a chance, he might practice on others what has been done to him. Right now he can only daydream violence. Violence, the language of violence, is his only outlet, but it is not the language of thud. His words remember. Here is a portion of the scene between Winston and Julia at their first lovemaking:

> Scores of times she had done it; he wished it had been hundreds—thousands. Anything that hinted at corruption always filled him with a wild hope. Who knew?. . . If he could have infected the whole lot of them with leprosy or syphilis how gladly he would have done so. Anything to rot, to weaken, to undermine.[11]

Later, after their lovemaking, Winston, studying "her smooth white flank" reflects that

> . . .in the old days. . . a man looked at a girl's body and saw that it was desirable, and that was the end of the story. But you could not have pure love or pure lust nowadays. No emotion was pure because everything was mixed up with fear, hatred.[12]

But sexual titillation is not for Winston. The Medusa has not turned inward because he resists doublethink and he is capable of memory, therefore rage. Rage gives him a slight sense of power, and power is your best aphrodisiac. The true connoisseur of this aphrodisiac is, of course, Big Brother, who enjoys the might of being right and beating up dwarves and turning men and women into ducks. The language of thud, bang, jam, screw, beat, bang is his gospel.

We are now on the verge of 1984. Every major city in the United States has adult book stores and porn cinema houses. The more liberated a community, the more these estab-

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* *"Shooting an Elephant"*

[11] 1984, *p. 104.*

[12] 1984, *p. 105.*

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lishments flourish—due, no doubt, to the open minds and the scorn of censorship and the respect for the buck that flourishes in open societies. But a big question is the necessity for conventional porn in a world that offers it so freely. The essence of conventional porn is the escape from the sewer. Those whom conventional porn must satisfy are repressed people who scribble in toilets or make anonymous phone calls or write anonymous letters. They are people who have lost control, and porn is their cry of pain, triumph. The writers or purveyors of this stuff must give expression to this deep need to debase or be debased. But those who need this outlet today are still in the minority, for everyone is being urged to do his thing, and the only sin is to remain in the closet. The sale of porn today, conventional porn, is not so much an outlet for sick people as it is a commodity for enterprising men and women. It is big business, this side of respectability. It has a host of lawyers to defend its right of free speech. Probably one picks up shares of porn everytime one purchases mutual funds. One mustn't knock it if one hasn't tried it. Business will welcome with open arms any expression of love from incest to copulation with children or nanny goats and find a product by which to sell it, even if it is only a sweatshirt. The sewer is open to all, if we can find the right word, and we can.

That's the American spirit. DeToqueville brilliantly describes this spirit, our aptitude "to double the meaning of a word. . . and sometimes render it ambiguous"[13] as does Orwell in more than one of his attacks on euphemism. But the point is that we are making conventional porn a business, something Winston's *1984* does not do. We are consumers of everything; we have outlets both emotional and financial for every depression and perversion. Here is a porn star describing her art:

> I feel sex is a very natural thing that we treat in an unnatural manner. . . I won't do it with animals. I won't have oral sex, anal sex. A cum shot (shot of male ejaculation) is stupid. When they do external shots, I say do it on the pubes. They want to rub the sperm all over the place.[14]

And the reporter describing her show at Mitchell Brothers O'Farrell Theater in San Francisco:

> To the delight of the male crowd she forced two nude women to expose themselves to the audience and perform several sexual acts including masturbation, oral sex, and fist fucking. She also inserted roses, a belt, and connected the two women to a two-headed dildo a yard long.[15]

And here is a chap on television who has set up a dating agency for people with herpes. Soon another enterprising genius will start an agency, more or less respectable, called Rent-a-kid. The buck is all. If it sells, it's swell.

Right next to the stuff one purchases in adult book stores are escapist novels that bear the trademark Harlequin or some other goggle-eyed name, novels where the writers who churn the stuff are warned never to use naughty language, to eschew absolutely the language of violence and of sex. And in another part of our forest is the surrealism of John Irving's *The World According to Garp*, a work immediately turned into film because some of the scenes certainly border on porn. Yes, our world may stink, but it has vitality. Winston's world is dead; it is the world after the ultimate revolution. We have a long way to go. For we have room for tripe, trite, sewer and art. And we have not yet internalized violence. Conventional porn is alive and well and living all over. Perhaps the only trip that isn't fully open to us yet, and it is in this area that our world can still experience that old feeling, is in the area of violence. Violence has not been fully explored or exploited. Our world simply does not permit getting away with torture and murder unless it is in Viet Nam or El Salvador. But if we can somehow sanctify sadism at home, give it a just cause or a champion like Kojak (a whole world loved Kojak), what a relief that would be. Alas, Kojak had to go. Even the lollipop could not sanctify him. So now we look for him underground in re-runs, or in comic books where he has always resided anyway, or in really grade-D flicks. There is also the Holocaust for really prime kicks. We can always see re-runs of the Holocaust, and for a just cause. . . which is that we must never forget.

The real titillation of our world is power and violence. Power through violence, sadism sanctioned by power, is our new porn. Examine the thrill of reading about political prisoners in *Newsweek*, how in Chile one such prisoner was strapped to a metal grill where CNI agents poured water over his toes and attached electrodes to his testicles, fingers and toes; how another had his head thrust into a bucket of water mixed with vomit and urine.[16] The letters which I receive from Amnesty International are even more appetizing. The thrill of this cruelty is the thrill of power. It is Orwell's vision of the totalitarian world before the ultimate revolution. Klaus Barbie not only tortured and killed but enjoyed it. Klaus Barbie not only enjoyed it, but he got away with it. . . for forty years. The Bolivian authorities were loath to part with Barbie; he had a lot to teach their police. But he got away with murder; that's the ticket. Barbie got away with murder. Barbie played God for a long time. Big Brother *is* God.

And that is why one must pause in the teaching of *1984* to recall the Watergate episode, the events as well as the macho language of its perpetrators. That is why one must pause in the teaching of *1984* to examine what critics call Pentagonese and more recently Haigspeak. That is why one must pause to examine the sound and the words of Acid and Punk Rock, the very names of the stars who sing the stuff; to examine even the language of the Atari games, to behold the language of thud, language sometimes encased in velvet gloves, but language nonetheless of men who are beginning to play at God in the sense that Big Brother is God—not a God that brings life to people but the God that brings death. . . It is the language also of those who seek to escape the old feelings of tenderness or compassion or charity by playing vampire or hit man or ghoul. But in both cases the Medusa is turning inward, men depriving themselves of language in order to sell a product or a cause and depriving those who are their willing gulls. The teacher of *1984* must be witness, I think, to the porn of 1984.

—*Flossie Lewis*

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[13] *Alexis DeToqueville, "The Modification of the English Language,* Democracy in America,

[14] *"Haven Can Wait," in* The Daily Californian, *August, 1978.*

[15] Ibid.

[16] *"Prisoners of Conscience," in* Newsweek, *February 14, 1983, p. 40.*

Breaking Silence

Contemporary American Fiction, edited by Douglas Messerli. Sun and Moon Press. $14.95
The Kentucky Stories, by Joe Ashby Porter. Johns Hopkins. $12.50
Shiloh and Other Stories, by Bobbie Ann Mason. Harper and Row. $12.95

In our time, the short story is both open to question and an act of questioning. Stories are questionable because, though they often seem to imitate us and our lives, they are fictions, structures of language in a world that does not appear to need words in order to be. In such a world, stories serve a questionable purpose, if in fact they serve any purpose at all. At best, they would seem to be the means by which we speak untruths to ourselves and each other. Stories break the silence.

Stories are also ways of questioning the possibilities of language and, in many ways, the possibilities of stories themselves. Many contemporary fictions openly question the nature of fiction, the storiness of stories, perhaps in hopes of closing off the questionable nature of stories once and for all. Whatever the case may be, however, every story, overtly or covertly, raises and answers this question: What is a story?

In Douglas Messerli's anthology, *Contemporary American Fiction*, stories become ways of putting words together in structures that do not pretend to imitate the world beyond language. Instead, these fictions are equal to themselves and betray themselves at the same time. Walter Abish's "Alphabet of Revelations" is a suburban soap opera, but cool and dispassionate and played out not according to the rules of realism but as an elaborate alphabetical calculus of names: Arlo, Bud, Clem, Donna, Erna, etc. The fiction is a game played within an arena that is separate from the world of facts. Leslie Scalapino's "Days are ok" is also a separate reality of language, made up of bits and pieces, short paragraphs that hold together only because the reader reads them under a single title. There are no characters, no plot, no chronology; the "I" of the work is only a printed "I," isolated on the page. "Days are ok" is a discourse that does not attempt to point beyond itself. It is rather a way of using words.

Like "Days are ok," Gilbert Sorrentino's "The Gala Cocktail Party" is a place where a variety of discourses come together. Sorrentino juxtaposes a number of different voices speaking at the same time of different things, creating not a story in the ordinary sense but a disjointed and heavily-textured surface of language that is not so much "about" something as it *is* something in itself. Jeff Weinstein's "A Jean-Marie Cookbook" is precisely what the title says it is—the story of a young man named Jean-Marie told in the form of a cookbook, complete with recipes and the rules of dining etiquette. Jean-Marie's tale and the cookbook entries are spliced into each other like Scalapino's paragraphs and Sorrentino's bits of dialogue, and by being brought together in the same paper space these disparate elements generate other texts that are neither one element nor another but something in addition, like sparks between the electrodes of an arc lamp. The story happens not on the page but in the act of reading the words, of putting them together again.

Many of the pieces in *Contemporary American Fiction* are simultaneous stories in this sense—stories that dismantle the idea of storiness by proceeding word by disjointed word, page by isolated page while at the same time forcing the reader to reconstruct each work into a single event that occurs all at once in the mind. The juxtaposition of verbal elements, of discourses, never allows the reader to look off into the world beyond language; such a story keeps the reader's eyes on the page.

It seems reasonable to ask why. Why the disruptions, the deconstructions? Why this refusal, this rejection of the traditional story?

In his introduction to the anthology, Messerli suggests:

> Despite the assertions of literary critics and historians, most contemporary writers do not write because they have something to say, I suspect, but because something cannot be said.

Is this true? Is postmodern fiction an effort to break with the traditional story in order to speak the unspeakable, perhaps to reach the unspeakable truth of the world beyond speaking? Certainly there might be any number of writers who *hope* to escape from language. But, on another level, can any work of fiction actually reach an unspeakable reality?

No, because a work of fiction that could transcend language would no longer be a fiction, a story. It would have consumed itself to become a transparent page through which the reader would see the unspeakable world. If Messerli is right about this effort to speak the unspeakable, then postmodern fiction is an impossible contradiction. Like the works of Abish, Scalapino, Sorrentino, and Weinstein, such fiction is only language that is equal to itself. But by betraying its own fictivity, by exposing the storiness of the story, such fiction also hopes to cancel itself out, to go beyond itself, to be both itself and not itself at the same time.

Melvyn Freilicher's "The Textbook" is a self-conscious effort to collapse all of literary history to a single point—a vanishing point that erases itself. Again, the story is a juxtaposition of texts, parodies of and about Emily Dickinson, Nathanael West and Hawthorne, Jack Kerouac, Gertrude Stein, Plato, and others, each text canceling the others and canceled in turn in an attempt to reach "the point at which the Contradiction ceases to be a contradiction (& vice versa.)"

But, of course, "the Contradiction" remains. Freilicher claims to speak "the largely unspeakable," but in fact, as he also knows, "The Textbook" speaks exclusively of the already-spoken—other texts. As the title suggests, this work that intends to speak the unspeakable is self-consciously textual. It is, in the end, only fiction, only words.

John Perreault's "The Catalogue" is another story that tries to transcend itself by confessing to its own storiness. The author even betrays himself and the idea that first gave rise to the story about Katherine and her mail-order home.

> Katherine, using a thick, wonderfully illustrated catalogue, ordered everything she owned by mail from Chicago. I have a facsimile of one of those catalogues. It has 1,184 pages and I have amused myself by imagining ordering from it and imagining someone ordering from it at the time of its original publication.

In his story, "Keeper," Steve Katz explores the possibilities of storiness by telling the story of a character who tells the story of a character who tells yet another story. Like his protagonist Dusty, and like Perreault, Abish, and the others, Katz would seem to be "obsessed with the story he had to tell," a story that becomes equal to itself in the attempt to cancel itself. Katz's various stories erase each other, but what remains is not unspeakable silence, not reality, not truth, but storiness.

What is a story? For the authors in Messerli's collection, the story is words, an avowed fiction that reaches a semblance of truth by moving toward silence, by betraying itself as a fiction, by exploring its own storiness. Joe Ashby Porter's *Kentucky Stories* are also stories about storiness and about people in situations, characters involved in more or less straightforward plots. But Porter's stories are not about the real Kentucky, of course. They are not about anything real at all. In fact, as Porter writes in "A Child of the Heart," these stories are clearly open to question.

> We have the story second-, sometimes third-hand, but we have managed to piece it together in the course of many long evenings when the talk turns to neighbors and their people.

Porter's stories are meant to be told and told again, and in most cases the teller is also told by the story, by Porter. And of course, with each telling and re-telling, the tale moves farther and farther from anything resembling truth. "Murder at the Sweet Variety" is, as the narrator says, only one of "hundreds of tales of those days," and no doubt it is one he has told again and again himself, perhaps in the attempt to be rid of it, to reach a silence beyond the words. As such, the "facts" of the story are open to question, as are the "facts" of "A Child of the Heart" which exists only in versions handed down from teller to teller.

By putting themselves in question and openly exploring their own storiness, Porter's stories confuse our notions of fact and fiction, event and language, the unspeakable and the spoken. "Nadine, the Supermarket, the Story Ends" is perhaps Porter's strongest character study, though in fact his narrator never appears. Instead, she offers herself in the three stories she tells. The first, "Nadine," is an outlandish soap opera success story about a woman who moves quickly from unhappiness in Kentucky to the White House as the first female president. The second, "The Supermarket," is, as the narrator insists, "a true story." In fact, it is the rather mundane tale of a boy from the narrator's neighborhood who commits an act of vandalism in a grocery store. The third piece, "The Story Ends," is about a nuclear holocaust that destroys the entire world except for the small area in Kentucky where the narrator and her family live.

By juxtaposing these three tales in the same space, Porter creates a sense of frustration, confusion, even apocalyptic vision rooted in despair. More, he collapses the distinction between fact and fiction. "Nadine" and "The Story Ends" are obviously fictive. "The Supermarket" would seem to be factual, believable. And the image of the narrator that is generated by the three tales rings painfully true. But in fact, all three tales and the narrator herself are fictions, structures of language that exist only on the page. The truth of the narrator is betrayed by her fictions, and yet Porter's fictions in turn betray these "truths."

Bobbie Ann Mason's stories of Kentucky are not nearly as adventurous as Porter's. The stories in *Shiloh* are well-written, straightforward narratives—stories in the traditional sense. For Mason, the story is not open to question. Rather, it is what it has always been—logical plot, detailed settings, recognizable characters. It is about life, and life is completely speakable. The dust jacket describes these stories as sharing "pinpoint accuracy of external detail and inner vision."

This is not true, of course. Mason's fictions are not accurate and detailed descriptions of the world beyond language where we live out our lives. Like the fictions of Abish, Sorrentino, Porter, and the others, *Shiloh and Other Stories* are simply words. Mason is a very skilled writer, but if her fictive worlds are familiar, it is not because they resemble our world. It is because they resemble other fictions, other stories.

We know these stories. We have read them before, or at least we have read stories very much like them. We have told them ourselves—though perhaps not as well as Mason does. Again and again, we have used the familiar form of these stories to explain ourselves to ourselves. Mason's tales are what Porter calls "the old story with one beginning and twenty middles and three or four endings."

But even these stories that scrupulously avoid the question of storiness answer it by reminding us that stories are what we are. They teach us how to live. They give us means for interpreting our lives and ourselves.

Like us, Mason's characters are defined by stories, in this case by popular culture. They follow TV and the movies and interpret their lives accordingly.

> She hates the thought of a string of husbands, and the idea of a stepfather is like a substitute host on a talk show. It makes her think of Johnny Carson's many substitute hosts.

We have learned that stories explain the truth of what we know, though in fact we don't always recall that these truths are only stories.

> Leroy has read that for most people losing a child destroys the marriage—or else he heard this on *Donahue.* He can't always remember where he learns things anymore.

Whether she intends it or not, Mason reminds us that it is important for us to question the nature of storiness, to question the stories we have received, to know what stories are. The answer to the question "What is a story?" would seem to be—*it is what we are.* We need stories, because we must speak about ourselves, and the unspeakable truth always eludes us.

Those authors like Porter, Sorrentino, Katz, Abish, and others who question the possibilities of stories and storiness open us to question as well. If we are stories, the extended possibilities of stories extend our own possibilities. —*Welch D. Everman*

Holes in the Wall, and Pleasure Palaces, Too

According to Theatre Communications Center of the Bay Area (TCCBA), there are, give or take, 90 theatrical organizations in and around San Francisco. This area extends south to include San Jose and Santa Cruz, along with the Peninsula; there's the east bay, Berkeley, Oakland and Alameda County; and north there's Marin, Napa, Sonoma Counties. Emanating out of all these organizations in all this space is a plethora of regional theatre—though since the word 'theatre' suggests a stage, an auditorium and a straight play to us traditionalists, perhaps it might better be described as a multitude of performance art. It's a wide range: between the formality and convention of American Conservatory Theatre (ACT) through varying degrees of experimentation in the various avant garde rooms to community theatre in some town, from The Pickle Family Circus to "Amazing Apes"—a metaphysical comedy hour, from Children's Theatre to productions staged by the drama departments of local colleges and universities or The Peoples School of Dramatic Arts.

And if some of it goes up under proscenium arches before auditoriums with ordered seats, around the Bay performance art often happens in what are holes in the wall, truly. The play's the thing in community centers, in parks and on beaches, in converted garages, storefronts, warehouses, basements and churches and synagogues and renovated Army installations—vintage World War II. The San Francisco Bay area is, some say, a place which harbors in its many companies the most viable and innovative theatre outside of New York—the zenith. Or, others say (comparisons to commercial Broadway aside), it's as good or better here than there.

Taking place in May, to promote and celebrate all this, is Bay Area Theatre week, an annual function of TCCBA (the nonprofit organization offering services and information about all of it). In a June Sunday San Francisco *Chronicle* "Datebook" piece, Bernard Weiner, a local theatrical critic and playwright, quoted several outlanders who had been in town for the occasion. Like Jeremy Gerard, critic from the Dallas *Morning News:* "In the last 25 years, [the Bay Area] has emerged as home to some of the most adventurous theatres in the country . . . risk is everywhere—adventure taking with concepts at the heart of theatre posed to an audience willing to share in that adventure. This town's theatre can be flaky, pedantic, weird, outrageous and irritating, but it's almost never staid."

And Julius Novick of the *Village Voice*, winner, this year, of the George Jean Nathan Award for Criticism: "In many American cities, an avant garde or alternative theatre is one that boldly tries to do what has already been done in the East Village or Soho (New York). But in the San Francisco Bay Area, there is a vigorous, often genuinely experimental alternative theatre scene, with ramifications aesthetic, political, ethnic and sexual. There are more alternative theatre companies in the Bay Area with a history, a track record, than there are in New York. . . ."

Weiner also quotes English Professor Albert Wertheim from Indiana University, here for 9 months with a resident theatre company (The Berkeley Repertory) on an Eli Lilly Fellowship. "My impression of Bay Area theatre is that producers here are more willing to go out on a limb and experiment . . . I like the way theatres cross pollinate . . . actors and directors from one company working at another. There's also a lot of good amateur and semi-pro stuff around. . . . And the success of many of their productions demonstrates there are a variety of playhouses around, that you don't need a major space to do good theatre."

The Fertile Void

I have become less traditional. In the Middle Ages theatres and performers traveled in "Pageant Wagons," rolling stages which could stop and play anywhere. Circuses do that now, and perhaps more theatrical companies should do it also. I have also seen how theatre/performance art can be staged any place. For the past four summers I have followed with increasing interest the Bay Area Playwrights' Festival/Playwrights Unlimited, which, for the past two, has used as its locus the Tamalpais High School in Mill Valley.

Of the two most formal theatres on the grounds, one is the student theatre, the other a Greek Amphitheatre. During the school year, the former is home to Ensemble Theatre Company (under the aegis of Dan Caldwell and Michelle Swanson, director in her own right, as well as the Assistant Artistic Director of the Playwrights' Festival). My daughter was a member of this company the four years she went to Tam, and many productions I sat through, watching her mature as an actress (she's now in her first year at The Neighborhood Playhouse in New York). E.T.C. is an excellent adolescent theatre company.

That theatre, created by walling in the conventional proscenium arch at one end of the large room which, originally, was to double as auditorium and gymnasium, is what used to be the back stage area. As for the Greek Amphitheatre, I saw my daughter's graduation there, which, as far as I know, is its primary function. And the rest of the school year, this empty windy shell? Perhaps a trysting place—perhaps a hide-out for nefarious adolescent activities? But, in the summer the playwrights come, and with the ghosts of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes in the audience, it's a theatre.

But, mind you, these two are the only formal—if rather unconventional—theatres at Tam High. Mind you, in these past two summers my traditional attitude about where to stage a play has been shattered. At the Playwrights' Festival performance art is put on all over the place, in a locker room, the swimming pool, the student center, on the lawn, in an arbor, the athletic fields—any and everywhere. If the festival is nothing else (and, in fact, it is much more), it is a microcosm of the idea that to put

Coming in the NAR:

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on a play all you need is a hole in a wall, and maybe you don't even need the wall—the Fertile Void. Lao Tze said, "Though clay may be molded into a vase, the utility of the vase lies in what is not there."

A Dream

The Playwrights' Festival creates a place for playwrights, actors, directors, technicians, students. Having built in its six-year history a national reputation, now it attracts people from all over. Its workshops, experiments, and performances are a kind of performance art laboratory. Some of it works magnificently and some falls on its face. That's the nature of taking risk—without it, nothing is accomplished. According to Robert Woodruff, founder and Artistic Director, the future should be "a dream . . . the eventual creation of a center for playwriting research, where local and national writers would come by invitation or request, to live and develop pieces outside the mainstream of American Theatre and the pressures inherent in such working situations . . ."

The summer before last, the 5th annual Festival, I signed up for a playwriting class conducted by Norah Holmgren. She was a founding member of The Firehouse Theatre of Minneapolis, is a playwriting teacher at San Francisco State and other places. A playwright herself ("Evening Sky," "The Desire For A City"), she also reads scripts for the local film company, Godmother Productions. They were responsible for the fine film "Tell Me a Riddle" of several years ago (directed by Lee Grant, and adapted from Tillie Olsen's short novel of the same name). The theme of last year's festival was collaboration, several writers working together on the creation of one piece, not an easy thing for a writer's ego to accept.

This past summer I signed up for a Directing for Playwrights class, taught by Woodruff. Preparing for this year, he noted in the brochure, in the "winter we began exploring the idea of interdisciplinary work—the match of writers with composers, musicians, choreographers, dancers, video artists. . . . The synthesis between music and theatre has for years been a fertile area of exploration, with writers attempting to harness the power of the musical event, and composers desiring to harmonize and counterpoint to the ideas of the written text. . . . Gradually, music emerged as a theme for Festival VI."

Robert Woodruff got his MA in Theatre Arts from S.F. State University back in the beginnings of the '70s. Subsequently he has directed, in collaboration with many contemporary playwrights, Michael Cristofer, Thomas Babe, Des McAnuff, Richard Nelson, David Mamet, Sam Shepard (including the Pulitzer Prize winning "Buried Child") and more—at many theatres in San Francisco, New York, and Chicago. He said of theatre: "I think that it's anything that can shape and alter your vision of the way you look at the world—which is different for everybody."

A native of New York, seeing a lot of theatre when he was growing up, he told me his interest in it stemmed from "some desire for immediate gratification. [To watch] something I did take form, to quickly see the result of it—finishing it. As opposed to studying something for a very long period of time—which may have led to something in terms of something called a career which seemed distant and not tangible. . . . I felt I could do theatre instantly, I trusted I could do this. . . . I didn't want to study something; I wanted to do it."

It's immediacy he's talking about, seeing the formulation happen, and then seeing the result as a director—not a writer, not an actor. Theatre is a collaborative art (playwright, actors, director, finally the audience), not, as in writing or painting, for instance, a lonely one. "Directing," he said, "seemed to be where you had the most control—obviously. . . . You find that in the American theatre, where the training is so eclectic, that you can rarely speak to two actors in the same language. What you are doing in rehearsal—if you haven't worked with a company before—is trying to find a language that works between you and each actor. . . . Actors are brilliant. Did you ever try to act? It's impossible. I don't know how they do it."

In 1976 The Playwrights' Festival came to be because "I wanted to create an event where we would bring people from different theatres together and work on material. The outlet then for new plays was not as large as it is now, so for a number of seasons we solicited scripts and brought in people who had worked together at different theatres. Now it has grown into something not so script orientated, more with expanding the idea of what playwriting is, expanding how playwrights look at their craft. . . . It's come down to trying to create just a structure where people can come and explore different means of collaborating."

If today's theatre is more experimental, I ask, then what should be its elements, its form? Robert Woodruff thinks it should be free, that it contains anything . . . vaudeville, circus, mime and music, drama and melodrama. It should contain elements of history, myth, politics, psychology, or a combination of all of it. All theatre is performance art. And its length is unimportant. There may be as strong a hit in a monologue—as telling or moving as the many hits in an epic. The old 1-2-3 act play is old.

Of all the performance art I have been witness to over the past several years there's no question that Sam Shepard's "Fool for Love" was one of the most exciting. Produced at the Magic in San Francisco (which calls itself a "writer's theatre"), it's another of his dark westerns, and after its run here it moved to New York. There's no act break in the play, no way to get away from the pressure generated by three characters compacted in a motel room in the desert, a fourth character sitting off stage, both a part of the action and chorus to it. (Its male lead, Ed Harris, is playing John Glenn in the movie, "The Right Stuff," directed by local Phil Kaufman. Shepard himself plays Chuck Yeager in the movie.)

Woodruff talked about the play. "On some level every live performance is theatre, and maybe the form is moving away from the play. Like Sam's new play and the production he has created, it's really a jump from literature, really a live performance. There's a sense of risk . . . a sense of immediacy about it . . . definitely live in the room—the movement is as important as the literature . . . as the musical score in a dance piece is as important as the dancer's technical proficiency. He's an author who has a great respect for actors, great love of the creation of a work which starts with the text and then draws from the actors what they bring to the material."

If You've Got the Money, Honey . . .

In 1971, while Woodruff was at S.F. State, he co-founded (along with Chris Silva, now a N.Y. producer) San Francisco's Eureka Theatre which is, after considerable travail, still very viable. "The theatre," he said, "was much more important than going to school." Speaking of the early days and his thrust, Woodruff said: "it seemed the outstanding pressure then was just artistic . . . getting it right in your own mind, in the company's mind—taking the time you needed to do that. We weren't restricted by economics. Now you still try not to be restricted by economics, but there is more pressure."

Pressure, of course, translates into money to pay the actors, to rent the props, to hire the hall—not to mention postage, telephone, and the Pacific Gas & Electric bill. How does performance art (along with all the other arts) survive—let alone prosper—in a country where, as it is said, the policy on the arts is that there's no policy?

In August the National Endowment for the Arts announced its $6.9 million Theatre Program grants. Of the 19 companies in the Bay Area slated to receive funding (a total of $335,000, give or take), TCCBA surveyed 14 of them. Six will get less, three were knocked out, two remained the same, six received more. The losses totaled $49,250, the gains $18,250.

JEANIE THOMPSON

RETURNING

In my old neighborhood again it's cold, November
and the reds and golds of maple, gingko I collect

are far too vivid for memory. I walk, holding a handful
of leaves speckled with rot. I turn the familiar

corner past the Lacy's house, and I'm twelve years old.
The sound of wind through white pine and sweet gum

soothes, as necessary as a lullaby. When a cat at ten yards
emits a sound like speech, I stop to answer her.

The wind nudges, mouthing a script in the leaves
scattering like children across the high green lawns.

Now at the school yard, drawn by the screech and cheers
of recess, the teacher stands, poker stiff in the wind,

watching a game of kickball. Her blue skirt and brown sweater,
her dark glasses firm against the winter sun.

The tall pines brush each other like shy girls.
The woman stands, still watching me

racing against the ball, my foot cocked—
I turn the corner, allowing memory and childhood

their moment near one another, so quiet,
these patient neighbors.

In California's budget there were serious reductions in many areas. The Cal Arts Council funding was cut back significantly. The legislature had recommended $11.414 million, which was less than in '81-'82. Governor George Deukmejian (Republican) originally proposed $10.679 million. When the dust settled only $9.003 million was written into law. With less than 36 cents per capita, California now ranks 30th in its spending for the cultural well-being of its residents. The portent is not good for non-profit theatre.

From the Hotel Tax fund in the city of San Francisco a total allocation of $3.4 million was made, down from $3.6 million last year. The sum of $426,600, or 13% of the total, will go to seventeen theatre companies.

Solicitations come in the mail, the phone rings in the evenings: this or that theatre company wants me to subscribe. In the past I have (you do it early and you get a bigger break on the price) but I felt it was limiting. Automatically I attended a play on certain nights of certain weeks. Sure, I know the theatres depend on subscriptions to have the working capital to produce their work, nevertheless (along with some guilt) my choice this year is to have freedom to pick and choose what I want to see from the 25 or 30 listings in the Sunday paper, and the announcements in "Call Board" (the monthly publication of TCCBA).

"An Equity House is a Misnomer"

Jay Moran is currently the San Francisco representative of Actor's Equity Association—AEA, the national union organization which represents "all professional performers in the legitimate theatre."

Policy is determined by the Council in New York—75 nationally elected actors and stage managers—but decisions are not made without consulting the two regional advisory boards, the Midwestern in Chicago, the Western in Los Angeles. The latter, in turn, will not make a recommendation to Council without consulting the Bay Area Advisory Committee. Policy is, therefore, responsive to individual regional members' wishes.

There are 15 different national contracts, so the conditions—minimum wage, minimum rehearsal and performance standards—for a particular contract in N.Y. are the same—in general—for that contract in S.F. Top of the line is the Production Contract; under it, no actor is working for less than $610/week, though individual actors are free to bargain upwards from that. Down from the Production contract are the others: the Guest Artist Agreement, LORT (League of Resident Theatres), URTA (University Resident Theatre Association), Dinner Theatre, Industrial, Theatre for Young Audiences, Cabaret, Dramatic and Non-Dramatic Stock (with resident and non-resident divisions)—enough agreements to accommodate any situation.

After these are Letters of Agreement. In San Francisco that pays $70/week for 20 hours of work. Another option is the Policy Statement Agreement. Not a formal contract, it is an agreement whereby AEA members are permitted to rehearse and perform for no salary and considerably less than standard conditions. And finally, in San Francisco, there is the Waiver Agreement, where members are free to perform under even fewer stipulations than the Policy Statement. These substandard contracts are not codified. At another AEA office there is one lower than $70 for, in some cases, more than 20 hours of work a week. "While we're national, there's regional autonomy in certain areas," Moran said.

Generally and in theory a company manager can come to AEA with a project and budget and write a contract for it. But the company will have to pay at least the Federal Minimum wage of $3.35/hour—thus that figure of $70/week for 20 hours work. "For that the inference is clear," Moran said, "you're an actor at night and on the weekend . . . you're something other, 9-5. . . ."

In San Francisco, with the exception of traveling shows, there are no Production Contracts. Berkeley Repertory and ACT are LORT, players earning a minimum of $293/week (in this city that means an actor can earn his living as an actor). There are Letters of Agreement in place with Magic Theatre and Berkeley Stage Co. There are four companies with Policy Statements: the Eureka, One Act, Julien, and San Francisco Repertory.

Then there's the Waiver agreement—in effect from 1972 to the fall of 1982—in which there were only two requirements: the theatre was limited to 99 seats, and for any work not previously produced under an Equity Contract a subsidiary rights agreement had to be signed. This guaranteed the actors and the stage manager the offer of employment, or a few weeks salary in lieu thereof, if and when the production was put on under a standard contract in the future. The Waiver Agreement is specific to three counties: San Francisco, Alameda, and San Mateo. Marin was excluded because it was not deemed "a center of employment" in '72. No money changes hands in Waiver houses except at producers' discretion.

"When the Waiver went in ten years ago," Moran said, "an advisory committee at that time recommended those three specific counties. Since then there has been discussion to expand the waiver, go to Marin—to California as a whole—and our council has felt, and I agree with them completely, we're now at a point in our union's history where we are maximizing contract work. Let's not maximize non-contract work. A letter of agreement is a contract, not a particularly lucrative one, but federal minimum wage is honored, benefits, pension and health coverage are paid. On top of that the producer is making a contribution to the trust fund. But in a Waiver or Policy situation it's not a contract, there's nothing written on paper between the individual actor and producer. Because the salary they could afford is less than $3.35 an hour, less than minimum wage, those producers would be ill-advised, and subject to federal suit, to say they're hiring people under a contract. So Policy Statements and Waiver are non-contract with permission granted for AEA members to work. . . . Our focus is to minimize that arena, showcasing if you will, to maximize employment at federal minimum wage—at least—with benefits on top of it."

After 15 September of 1982, approved by a referendum of Northern California members, the following conditions were added: the rehearsal period limited to five weeks—previews limited to one week—the run of the engagement limited to eight weeks with a maximum of four performances per week—members asterisked in the program, *appearance through courtesy of AEA.*

Obviously, the largest problem any individual actor faces is employment. According to figures released by AEA, 80% of the members do not work in legitimate theatre. "In a typical year 65% of the membership earned less than $2,500. Over 73% had earnings under $5,500. 3% had incomes between $7,500 and $10,000. Less than 5% earned over $10,000. 13% had no earnings at all. While Equity's position as a bargaining agent imposes certain restrictions on its ability to create employment, it nevertheless seeks to encourage creativity on every level and in every place where people seek expression."

Moran sees the perception in the community and the local press that San Francisco is a great theatre town, but he is one who wonders if that's a national view. Put against a rigorous national standard there might be some disappointing criticism—particularly in fund raising and the business sense of this local regional theatre.

As Moran sees it, and I would agree: "San Francisco is very much a playwright and director town," not an actor or company manager town. "Once the managers can get attention focused on them and their skills, as the playwrights and directors have, then I think we'll be closer to having a business—rather than the art and craft of theatre. . . ."

Seattle has three LORT Companies; here there are only two. It all appears weighted towards being avocational. Obviously Moran would like to see the theatre prosper, but you "gotta get out of the University of California Berkeley/San Francisco State Drama Department Store Front Theatre Mentality." Economically you can't survive with a 99-seat house.

"In San Francisco you live with the reality that this is an Art for Art's Sake community . . . the capital of the avant garde and bohemianism. . . . The majority of the AEA members are not interested in earning a living from acting; they are interested in participating in the 'avocational arena' because their income comes from other sources—teacher/actor, writer/actor. . . ."

I know an actor who drives a taxi, another who's a banker, the third an aerobic exercise instructor. For the experience of perfecting craft, something is better than nothing—rather than not act at all, I will act for no money, showcase my talent (with the hope that a paying job comes sometime). Moran doesn't quarrel with that in theory but would like a measure of restraint. "Here you have a membership that might be quite different from what you get in Chicago. You can educate them as far as you can, or as far as they are willing to be educated; you can point out to them that there is nothing wrong with maintaining your artistic integrity, but you can temper that with a business sense; beyond that you really cannot go. . . . It is one of my toughest jobs to convince our actors not to give away the one thing they have to bargain with—their talent."

Where the Theatre Is

Last winter I saw "The Holdup" in one of San Francisco's pleasure palaces, albeit an old barnlike traditional theatre with not very good sight lines and too many uncomfortable seats. As a member of the audience I had a feeling of being lost in all that space and the stage seemed a long way away. A production of ACT (American Conservatory Theatre, which might be described as old guard, and most conventional). I enjoyed the play, one of those transition pieces about the death of the old west (which was a romantic illusion anyway) in the coming of the new. It was full-blown, with a traditional set and period costuming and it was written on commission in 1980 by Marsha Norman, at that time her fourth play. Since then, along with a screenplay for the "The Misunderstood," she has written the highly acclaimed "Night Mother" which opened in New York the same time "The Holdup" opened in San Francisco.

In the notes in the Playbill an interviewer had formulated a question describing regional theatres as outposts. "I don't think they are outposts at all," Marsha Norman replied. "For me the work in regional theatres is not only the way to get the plays in shape and finish my work, but it is a way of life that I find so supportive and friendly and enjoyable. It's not an outpost situation at all. It's where the theatre is—everywhere!

"Ideally the commercial theatre should be a national showcase. The commercial theatre can never be the test of whether a play is art or not. . . . Regional theatres serve to preserve and develop the literature of the theatre. I don't think they are regional in anything other than location." —*Lawrence Sturhahn*

Blue Suit

Barbara Baxley's acting career began in the crib. Hanging onto the poles, she "screamed and hollered" until her mother and father came to see what was wrong. "I realized with great joy nothing had to be wrong. Just play-acting could get you love and power."

What follows is an excerpt from Forgive Me For Being Mad, *a collaborative book based on the actress's life.*

—A.W.

Enraptured, I looked in the mirror in Bonwit's junior department. The blue suit was perfect with my fair skin, blue eyes and curly blond hair.

I had just graduated from the Neighborhood Playhouse with five dollars left in the bank. My friend, Kashin Wheeler, with whom I had been rooming, put it on the line.

"I am not going to support you, Barb, so get a job!"

Jo Van Fleet, another friend from home, checked every well-made seam and the nice curvaceous look the suit gave me. She finally said in her no-nonsense voice, "That's it. You'll take it."

I watched my reflection fill with joy. At that time, I wouldn't have dared buy so much as a scarf without the approval of someone who *knew*—a real New Yorker. I usually looked tacky because I was never able to get things together properly. A shoulder strap would slip, heels would run down, the coat would be the wrong color. My bags wore around the edges and I could never keep two gloves more than a few days.

I loved my blue suit and wore it for years until one night waiting for a train in a railroad station, I sat down next to Tallulah Bankhead. We were touring the country in *Private Lives.* I had on my blue suit. A three-year-old black coat covered with cat hair was slung across my lap. My cat, Tula, was in her wicker basket and I was surrounded by various pieces of mismatched luggage and a paper bag overflowing with cat food, can opener, dish and spoon. Tallulah gazed at me with cold horror in her blue eyes and said, "Don't sit near me. You look like a Yugoslavian refugee!"

I moved quickly over to the next bench with all my belongings and happily gazed at her ratty mink coat.

Up until that moment, my blue suit had been my joy. I felt real in it, almost a part of the happy world of the New York theater I had joined. I had worn my blue suit when I went to Maynard Morris, the actors' agent at the William Morris Agency on Madison Avenue, and asked, "Do you have anything?" He'd spluttered and quickly shut the door in my face. Then immediately opened it again and gazed at me and my blue suit. He spat, "Wait, wait," and shut the door again.

I stood there.

For the past three years, I had spent eight hours of every day learning ballet and modern dance until my muscles screamed and bones splintered in my feet. I had sung until my throat felt like cracked crystal and, hardest of all, I had bent to the perfection of Sandy Meisner's standards for his acting classes. I was 20 years old and had spent 17 of those 20 years preparing for this moment.

The door opened a crack—this time one of Maynard's eyes blinked nervously at me and just below his eye, I could see another cold orb, Miss Edie Van Cleeve—checking height, weight, age, talent—if any—as displayed by the blue suit. Again the door closed abruptly. Rustling and whispering sounds came from the other side. Finally Maynard appeared again, stuck a piece of paper in my hand and said, "Go to John C. Wilson's office, read for understudy, *Private Lives*, Tallulah Bankhead, Donald Cook." He repeated, "Donald Cook," and slammed the door.

The office was in Rockefeller Plaza and, as I knew I always got lost in big buildings, I went half an hour early. In Stockton, California, my home town, the highest building is the Medical-Dental building which has only ten floors. Mr. Stephen Cole sat at his desk in his sumptuous office and read the other parts to my "Sybil." The part was not hard for me to internalize as I had seen Donald Cook on the stage in California and had fallen in love with him (the "older man" in *Private Lives*)—with all the ardor of a star-struck teenager. I sat in my blue suit and pretended to be calm and self-assured. Stephen said, "Tomorrow, go to Westport. You will have to read for Miss Bankhead and Mr. Cook. A car will pick you up at the train and take you to the rehearsal hall. The 11:20."

Neither I nor Kashin had the slightest idea where or what was Westport. She was from Stockton, too. Finally, she said that my agent, Maynard, would know and I'd simply have to call him back and confess. By this time, I'd taken my blue suit off as I didn't want to shake and sweat in it. I had to wear it the next day if I could find out where was Westport. I also took off my stockings so they wouldn't run and my shoes so they would look clean. Bra and panties could be rinsed out. Kashin dialed for me, as I hadn't yet learned that skill very well—in Stockton, we talked to the operator.

I finally heard Maynard's "Hello, hello." He said everything twice which was fine for me because it gave me time to think.

I said, "This is Barbara and they want me to go to Westport tomorrow on the *train*!"

"Good, good, I know, I know, they told me, they told me, good luck!"

"Maynard!" I screamed because I realized he was about to hang up.

"What, what?" Exasperated.

"Maynard, please. I don't know where Westport *is* !"

"You don't—what?"

"I'm awfully sorry, Maynard, I don't know where Westport is."

Long silence. Finally he must have remembered I *did* just graduate from the Neighborhood Playhouse and I just might have come from somewhere besides New York City and environs.

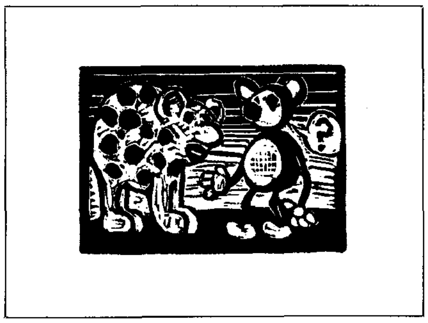
He said calmly, "Westport is in Connecticut. Connecticut, dear. All right?"

"Maynard, listen, Maynard, I forget where Connecticut *is*, I mean I don't know what train to *take*!"

By this time he could hear me crying.

"All right, all right, dear. Go to Grand Central, Grand Central. Tell them at the information booth you want the 11:20 to Westport. They'll tell you. They know, they know."

By this time, I was sobbing loudly and I screamed, "Maynard! I don't know where Grand Central *is* and I don't have money and how much does it cost to get to Westport, Connecticut and how long will I be *gone*?" By this time I had the distinct feeling that Maynard was crying too, which made me go louder.



He gasped and said, "Dear, do you want this job?"

"Yes, yes!" I screamed. Now I'm saying things twice too.

"All right, dear, I am going to send a man with fifteen dollars to your apartment. You wait right there, right there. Tomorrow, go out and hail a cab and just say, Grand Central. The cab will take you there. Grand Central. Then ask for the Westport train, buy the ticket and go get on the train. Be sure you buy the ticket. Stop crying, stop crying. You'll look terrible. They'll pick you up, you'll read for them and they'll take you back to the station. Then do it all in reverse. Got it? Got it? Stop crying. I can't talk to you when you're crying. Stop it."

"All right, Maynard. I'll wait right here for the money."

"Fine, fine, and you'll pay me back when you get your first check. Right? Right?"

"Yes, Maynard, thank you, thank you." Click. Click.

I asked the conductor to be sure to warn me when the train reached Westport. Glancing at my reflection in whatever object gave it back, I felt I looked like an actress in my blue suit—a *lady* actress!

At the station, I stepped into my first limo. In the back seat behind the chauffeur, I sat on a gray cloud floating over water and land to the Westport Country Playhouse, a beautiful restored New England barn. It wouldn't have mattered where I was. I floated into the rehearsal hall and was ushered like royalty into the "Presence." The "Presence" was, of course, the notorious and brilliant actress, Tallulah Bankhead, a legend in her own time. But there was another presence.

He didn't realize it, then, but Donald Cook was my dream-fantasy-father figure ever since I'd seen him in *Claudia* when it toured my hometown of Stockton, California. George Raft, my other father-love-figure faded away over Long Island, slicked back hair and all. Donald Cook was even handsomer, with tender loving blue eyes.

He read the part with me. I would play Sybil, the ingenue in love with the older man, Donald. Obviously, it was not hard for me to identify immediately with the part.

When we finished, we stood gazing at each other. Without warning, the "Presence"—coming out of nowhere—gave me a loud smack on my behind!

Startled, I swung around. How dare she! Even my mother didn't smack me, and she looked nothing like my mother!

Then, from the far side of the room, a soft and pointed voice said—as to a child, "Thank you." It was Mr. Cook.

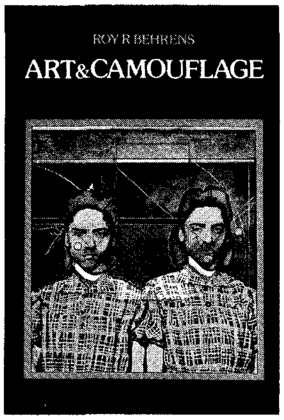
I couldn't look. I had completely forgotten my manners and was revealed as the tacky country girl inside the blue suit.

With a quite audible explosive "uh" I stumbled out the door.

But I got the job. We traveled all together to Chicago—Donald, Tallulah, and me in my blue suit.

—Barbara Baxley & Adrienne Wolfert

BOOKS FROM THE NAR



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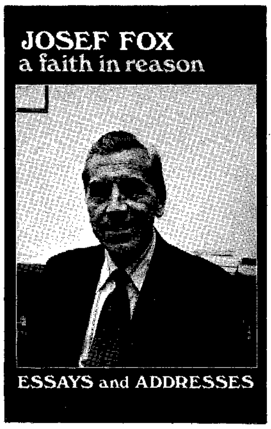

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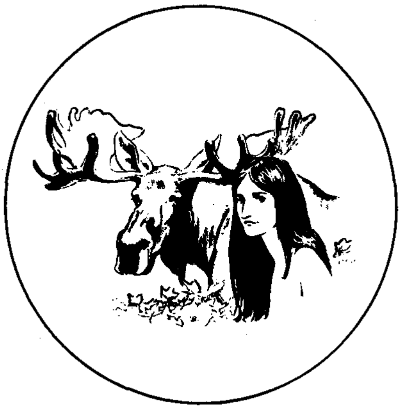

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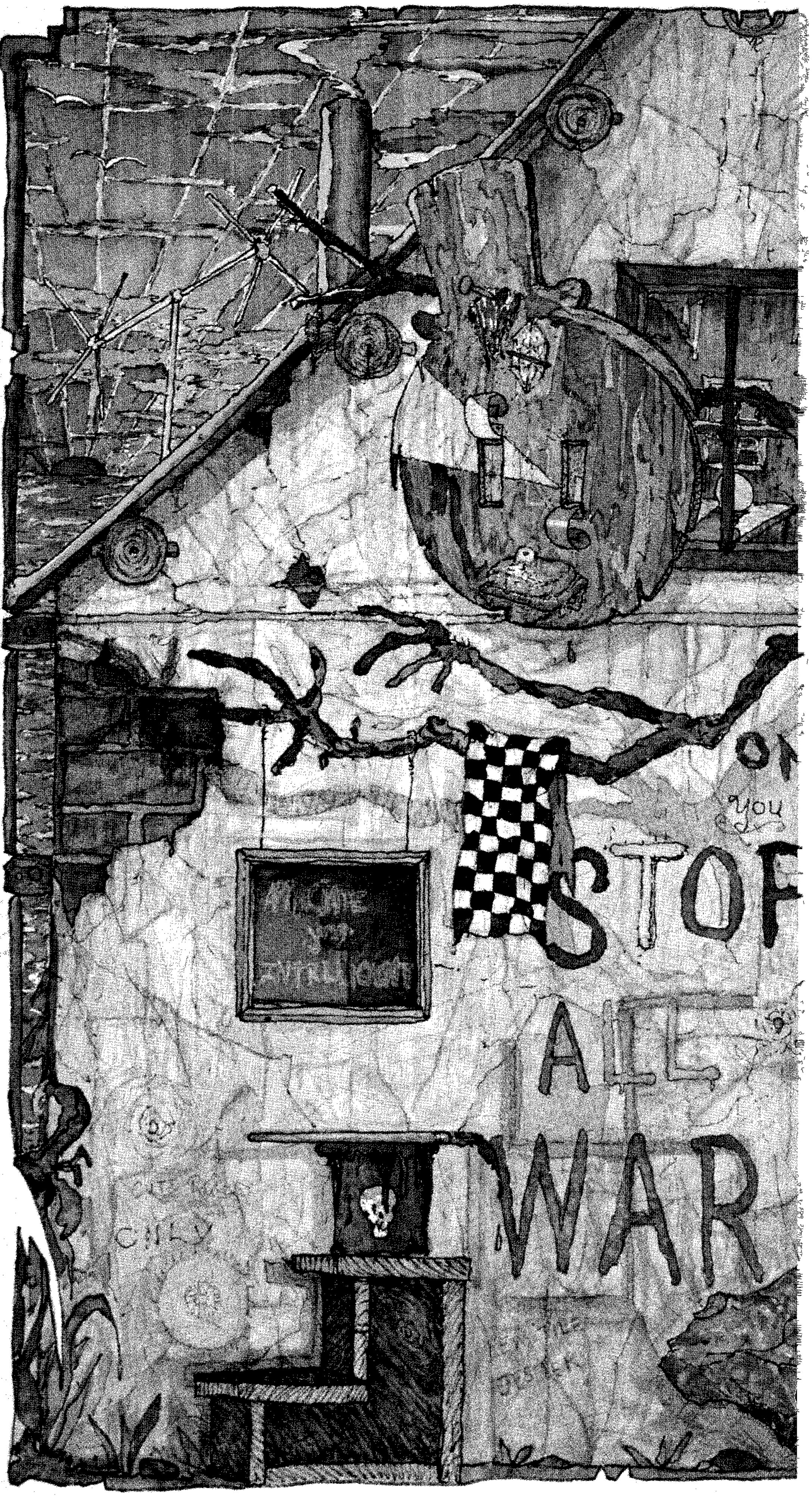
ON
you
STOP
ALL
WAR

THE JUST IF I BAWL - AND THE UNJUST IF EYE BALL